

**1st International Summer School and Colloquium on
Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications
at Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland
25th – 30th June 2001**

School dates and location

The summer school will be held between Monday 25th June and Saturday 30th June. On Sunday evening (24th of June) there will be a reception which will take place at the School of Psychology, David Keir Building, 18/30 Malone Road. This is also where the summer school will take place.

Aims and Objectives for the Summer School

Interest in both research on humour and practical applications of humour has increased sharply in the past decade. For new research students just beginning their research careers or those already-trained researchers considering a first research project on humour, this course will ensure that they enter the field with a strong foundation in existing theoretical and methodological issues, and are well versed in the pitfalls confronting the scientific study of humour. For those interested in practical applications of humour in either business or healthcare settings, the course will update them on the kinds of approaches that are being used around the world to put humour to work and to deliver the therapeutic benefits of humour to both patients and overworked healthcare staff. Those attending the applied course will also learn differing methods of coping with stress, and the physical health benefits, offered by humour, and will learn how to strengthen their own humour skills. They will also learn how to lead humour skills development programs themselves.

Structure of Course

a) Course

There will be three Strands; one each devoted to theory, research or applications of humour and laughter. Strand One will provide general background in regard to the theory and findings on humour and laughter, and will be held Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 11.00 am. The second Strand will deal with research issues, and introduce methodology and current hot topics in research on humour and laughter. This Strand will be held between 1.00 pm - 3.00 pm (except Wednesday) and on Saturday morning. The final Strand will cover applied issues, and familiarise you with practical applications of humour and laughter in a variety of settings. It will cover humour in the workplace, humour in healthcare settings, and how to learn to use humour to cope with the stresses of life. This Strand will be held daily between 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm (except Wednesday) and on Saturday morning. Participants will be provided with reading material and working material in advance amounting up to 10 hours in total.

b) Colloquium

The colloquium part of the summer school will take place on Saturday. This is where participants may present their planned or finished research or ideas on how to implement and use humour in applied settings, in any form they like. Time will be allocated to present a talk or poster followed by feedback from speakers and the group and general discussion.

Participants wanting to present in the colloquium are requested to fill in a form with the title of the talk and an abstract of no more than 200 words. They are encouraged to bring material for prior consultation and distribution. This could be a manuscript describing finished research, but also general or specific plans for a humour study and the course can be used for feedback on the overall plan, design etc of their study.

Teaching faculty

Paul McGhee will teach Strand III (applied issues), and contribute to the other two.

Willibald Ruch will teach Strands I (theory) & II (research and methodology) with help from Paul.

About the Speakers

Paul McGhee, PhD, is an internationally known humour researcher and author of 11 books on humour. He now works full time as a professional speaker, and has provided programs on humour in 10 countries.

With a PhD in developmental psychology, Dr. McGhee spent 20 years conducting research on humour and laughter, and is viewed as a pioneer in the field. He has published over 50 scientific articles and chapters on humour. His books, *The Psychology of Humor*, *The Handbook of Humor Research* (vol's. I and II) and *Humor: Its Origin and Development*, served as cornerstones for the current resurgence of interest in research on humour and health.

Dr. McGhee began his research career at the State University of New York at Albany. His last academic position was at the Université de Paris V (Laboratoire de Psychologie Différentielle). He quit his academic career in 1989 to create his own company, *The Laughter Remedy*, in Wilmington, Delaware, USA. He now works full time as a professional speaker, providing keynotes and workshops on humour to both corporate and health care clients. He is at the cutting edge of the current movement to bring a lighter attitude to the workplace in order to boost productivity, morale, and creativity in the midst of the stress created by a rapidly changing corporate and healthcare work settings.

He is frequently interviewed by the mass media about humour. His work has been discussed in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek* (USA & Japan), *Geo* (German & French), *Schweizer Familie* (Swiss), *Der Spiegel* (German), *L'Impatient* (French), *VG* (Norwegian), *Oggi* (Italian), *Zeit* (German), *The Manchester Guardian* (British), *Intra* (Swiss), and numerous other magazines and newspapers. He has appeared on *The Learning Channel*, *PBS*, Dutch, Swiss and German television, and radio stations in numerous countries.

Dr. McGhee's corporate clients include General Motors, Xerox, AT&T, ITT, Merck, Pfizer, MetLife, Prudential, Merrill-Lynch, Hoffman-LaRoche, Novartis, BASF, and many

other Fortune 500 Companies. His unique expertise makes him a sought-after speaker among organisations struggling to manage mounting employee stress. Corporate programs also demonstrate the power of humour as a management tool, and how humour facilitates leadership, communication, team building, creativity, and productivity.

His healthcare clients include The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, American Association of Critical Care Nurses, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Association of Mental Health Professionals, Association of Mental Health Administrators, The Oncology Nursing Society, Licensed Practical Nurse Association, and many other health care conferences and hospitals. Health care programs also focus on the physical health benefits resulting from humour and the current movement to provide therapeutic humour programs in health care settings (in addition to the above list for corporations).

Both his corporate and healthcare programs are always entertaining and fun, but substantive, as well. They demonstrate how humour helps one cope with stress, providing the resilience now needed to sustain the peak levels of performance and quality service demanded of employees under increasingly stressful work conditions. Special attention is always given to how humour helps cope with the demand to do more with less, do things faster, assimilate more and more information, and cope with ever-increasing rates of change.

Dr. McGhee's latest book, *Health, Healing and the Amuse System: Humour as Survival Training* (Kendall/Hunt, 1999) discusses the basic research on humour and health/stress, and provides a hands-on Humour Skills Training Program. This is the only program of its kind. The book builds on what Paul covers in his seminars, and enables readers to continue developing humour coping skills long after his program is done. He writes monthly articles on the benefits of humour at both his own web-site, www.LaughterRemedy.com and at www.humour.ch.

Willibald Ruch recently moved to the School of Psychology at Queen's University. He received his PhD from the University of Graz, Austria in 1980 and later worked at the University of Düsseldorf, in Germany, where he is a professor of Psychology. Between 1992 and 1998 he held a Heisenberg-fellowship awarded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*—DFG (German Research Foundation) which he devoted to a study of the sense of humour. The psychology of humour, laughter and cheerfulness has been a focal point throughout his career and he has authored about 50 journal articles and book chapters on the subject and constructed several humour tests. He is a member of the editorial board of *HUMOR--International Journal of Humor Research* and co-editor of the *Humor Research monograph series*. Recently he edited and contributed several chapters to "The Sense of Humour: Explorations of a personality characteristic. Throughout his work his aim has been to weave humour with adjacent fields of inquiry while his interest in humour and laughter focus primarily on the definition and measurement of the sense of humour, deriving and validating a taxonomy of jokes and cartoons, the role of emotion, mood temperament in humour, the study of the facial expression in smiling and laughter, and more recently, the relationship between humour, laughter and health.

Course contents and schedule

Below is a description of the planned course contents and a tentative schedule (Actual content and distributions across the three slots may vary slightly).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning (9-11)	Theory/ findings	Theory/ findings	Theory/ findings	Theory/ findings	Theory/ findings	Applied (9-11)
Noon (1-3)	Methods/ topics	Methods/ topics	Excursion to Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Distillery	Methods/ topics	Methods/ topics	Colloquium (1-3) break
Afternoon (5-7)	Humour in healthcare, health benefits of humour; Paul McGhee			Humour in the workplace Paul McGhee	(3-5)	
Evening					Historical Pub/Music	Wrap-up and feedback

I. Theories and findings of humour and laughter (general background)

Time: Mon - Fri (9.00 am – 11.00 am)

Taught by Dr. Willibald Ruch, with contributions from Paul McGhee, PhD

This part will familiarise students with the theories of humour and laughter and review relevant research findings. This will cover the anatomy and physiology of smiling and laughter, onto phylogentic development, social and personality influences and brain correlates. The different theories of humour will be presented, along with their origins and supporting evidence. Typologies and forms of humour will be discussed. One section is devoted to the relationship between humour and personality, and the concept of sense of humour and the pertinent research on this personality characteristic.

II. Research issues (methodology and current hot topics)

Taught by Dr. Willibald Ruch, with contributions from Paul McGhee, PhD

Time: Mon, Tue, Thurs and Fri (1.00 pm – 3.00 pm), Sat (9.00 am – 11.00 am)

This portion will be devoted to methodology and the discussion of hot topics/unresolved problems that research on humour and laughter must address in the future. This will include how to distinguish and assess types of smiles and laughter using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS), a survey of instruments for the assessment of humour states and traits and how to construct and properly use them for the right setting, (which one to select for what purpose), methods of inducing humour and laughter and how to manipulate the crucial ingredients. We will also discuss why it is so difficult to define humour (and the sense

thereof) and other concepts in the field, and what we need to do to arrive at a common terminology in research on humour and laughter.

III. Practical Applications of Humour

Taught by Paul McGhee, PhD

Time: Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri (5.00 pm – 7.00 pm), Sat (11.00 am – 1.00 pm)

This portion of the course will be divided into three major parts: a) humour in the workplace, b) humour in healthcare settings, and c) how to learn to use humour to cope with the stresses of life. For a) the growing international trend to find ways of making work fun and the increasing support for bringing your sense of humour to your work, will be discussed. Special attention will be given to growing levels of job stress and humour's effectiveness as a tool for coping with stress and change. The impact of humour on morale, productivity, creativity, communication and more will be discussed. The kinds of things companies will be doing to bring humour and fun into work settings will also be discussed.

For b) the current international movement to bring humour (including clowns) into healthcare settings will be discussed. Special attention will be given to the approaches being used, and to the data on the health benefits of humour. Finally, c) will focus on Dr McGhee's Humour Skills Training Program. Guidelines will be given for learning how to improve the basic foundation skills required to use humour to cope with stress. Participants will also learn how to run humour skills training groups themselves.

Suggested reading for the course

Ekman, P. & Rosenberg, E. L. (Eds.) (1997), What the face reveals. Basic and applied studies of spontaneous expression using the Facial Action Coding System. Oxford; Oxford University Press.

McGhee, P. E. (1999) Humor, Health and the Amuse System. Kendall/Hunt, Duboquet, IO, USA.

Ruch, W. (Ed.) (1998) The sense of humour: Explorations of a personality characteristic. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.

A reading list will be provided as well. Participants will have access to the library, which contains copies of the books.

Accommodation

Participants will have the opportunity to arrange accommodation in advance. Details of the type and costs of accommodation for the duration of the Summer School will be available via this web-site within the next week. Those considering attending the Summer School will be given the opportunity to request their accommodation in advance as part of the registration process.

Those who plan to come earlier or stay longer can book a room in the Elms Halls of Residence. Accommodation there is available between Tuesday 19th June and 5th September. Please let us know in time whether you need extra accommodation.

Food

Queen's University and the School of Psychology are located in an area with lots of restaurants and dining places (a list and map will be handed out at the beginning). It is assumed that participants will want to explore the culinary scene themselves and no meal will be arranged except for breakfast.

Excursions

On Wednesday there will be a bus excursion to Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Distillery. The bus will leave at 11.30 am sharp and will return in the evening. Lunch will be provided as part of the excursion.

On Friday evening there will be a chance for you to enjoy a traditional Irish night in one of the local pubs in town.

A tour of the University will be provided during your stay, which should last around one hour (see visitor's centre: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/vcentre/>)

Course credit

Participants may get a course completion certificate for a full module provided they attend the 30 hours and do 10 hours of independent reading. This corresponds to a full module at Queen's University.

Fees

Participation fee will be £300 per person and £250 for students.

Registration

Registration for the Summer School can be done on-line at <http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/humour/form.html>.

Alternatively you can download a copy of the registration form from the above web address and send your completed form to Rhiannon McCready, whose contact details are listed below.

Completed registration details should be returned by Friday 9 March 2001. Successful applicants will be informed shortly after this date and informed of the processes available for

payment of fees. Course fees and any accommodation fees should be forwarded by Friday 6 April 2001.

Contact address

Dr. Willibald Ruch
School of Psychology
9033
Queen's University of Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
N. Ireland, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9027 4174 (office)
office)
Fax: +44 (0) 28 90664144
E-mail: W.Ruch@qub.ac.uk
Internet: <http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk>
<http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk>

Rhiannon McCready
School of Psychology Tel: +44 (0) 28

Queen's University of Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
N. Ireland, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9027 5445 (General
office)
fax: +44 (0) 28 90664144
e-mail: R.McCready@qub.ac.uk
Internet:

This summer school is endorsed by the International Society of Humour Studies (ISHS) (<http://www.uni-duesseldorf.de/WWW/MathNat/Ruch/SecretaryPage.html>)

Where we are and how to find your way here?

This web-site explains how to come to Belfast, how to find your way to Queen's University and where the departments are located. Look up this URL:

<http://titus.phy.qub.ac.uk/directions/index.html>

To find your way to the summer school, you enter the School of Psychology (#39 on the map) from Malone road. Queen's Elms Halls of Residence is #49 (78 Malone road).

Perhaps look up the site of the visitor centre: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/vcentre/>

and check the maps they provide: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/vcentre/maps/index.htm>

You can download the map (1.9 MB) and the key (40 KB) to the buildings here

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/info/images/qubmap.pdf>

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/info/images/qubmapkey.pdf>

To learn more about the University, including its structure and history and to view a campus map etc, .see: http://www.qub.ac.uk/info/qub_introduction.html

To learn more about the School of Psychology visit the site (<http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/>) or (<http://www.psych.qub.ac.uk/info/building/dkboutside.html>) to see the School of Psychology building.