



## 18<sup>th</sup> International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications

University of Wolverhampton, UK

The 18<sup>th</sup> International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter was held at the Telford Campus of Innovation of the University of Wolverhampton jointly by the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing from July 02 – 07, 2018 (see: <http://www.humoursummerschool.org/18/>).

The Summer School was organized by Josiane Boutonnet (English Department, University of Wolverhampton) and Dr. Tracey Platt (Department of Psychology, University of Wolverhampton). The course was intended to be of benefit to both research students and more experienced researchers considering conducting research in the field of humour and laughter.

The teaching faculty comprised twelve speakers, allowing greater diversity in the topics covered. Lectures were given by: Drs. Nicola Allen and Gerry Carlin (University of Wolverhampton, Dept. of Humanities), Dr. Daisy Black (University of Wolverhampton, Dept. of Humanities), Dr. Ian Brodie (Cape Breton University, School of Arts and Social Sciences), Dr. Tom Ford (Western Carolina University, Dept. of Psychology), Drs. Tracey Platt (University of Wolverhampton, Dept. of Psychology) and Jennifer Hofmann (University of Zurich, Dept. of Psychology), Dr. Dean Kelland (University of Wolverhampton, Department of Art and Design), Dr. Graeme Ritchie (University of Aberdeen, Dept. of Computing Science), Professor Willibald Ruch (University of Zurich, Dept. of Psychology), Professor Paul Simpson (University of Liverpool, Dept. of English), Dr Julia Taylor Rayz (Purdue University, West Lafayette, Dept. of Computer and Information Technology), and Dr. Tony Veale (University College Dublin, School of Computer Science).

The programme aimed to provide an overview of the interdisciplinary nature of humour research, by considering theory and empirical evidence, addressing special research issues, discussing methodology and evaluation of research findings to date, and also to consider some of the applications of humour and laughter.

Meet the Lecturer sessions, where participants could sign up for a one-to-one discussion with a lecturer of his/her choice were made available throughout the week.

Representative sessions addressed topics such as:

- An introduction to humour research
- Humour and positive psychology
- Modern history of assessing humour: Where are we at after a decade?
- Evaluation of a picture-based test for the assessment of gelotophobia
- The temperamental basis of the sense of humour: Findings on cheerfulness
- Incongruity theories of humour
- Linguistic theories of humour: SSTH/GTVH/OSTH
- Computational humour: Theory and practice
- Sarcasm in written texts: Human and computational recognition and detection
- Logic in jokes
- Disparagement humour: A double-edged sword in inter-group settings
- A view from below: Disparagement humour from the target's perspective
- Stand-up comedy as a genre of intimacy
- Local popular culture and comedy: Two cases from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
- Intimate genres revisited: Stand-up comedy and the folk aesthetic in interaction
- Falling slowly: Slapstick, comedy and pain explored through an interdisciplinary arts practice
- Tales of Unruly Women - A 1hr 30 performance of Medieval French and English Tales
- Humour and stylistics
- Satirical humour

- Humour and literature: 'A mouthful of Earl Grey in the morning - Punning from surrealism to Gardeners' Question Time'
- Irony: Broad and shallow
- Irony: Deep and narrow

Also workshops on topics of:

- A two-hour workshop on FACs (Facial Action Coding Systems) by Drs. Tracey Platt and Jennifer Hofmann.
- A one-hour workshop on Publishing in the HUMOR Journal by the Editor in Chief Dr. Tom Ford.

The Summer School was attended by 25 participants. The student body consisted of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers, and university faculty members, as well as professionals (medical doctor, clinical psychologists, speech therapists, computer science professional, marketing professionals, practitioners working in the area of therapeutic laughter). These participants came from the UK, Germany, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Norway, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Canada, the USA, Chile, Iran, China, Australia. Academic disciplines represented included Psychology, Linguistics, Folklore studies, Computer Science, etc. The variety of participants' experiences was reflected in the debate engendered by many of the sessions.

The Summer School Symposium took place on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and it featured presentations of the participants' planned or finished research, or ideas on how to implement and use humour in applied settings. The presentations comprised the following short talks and posters:

#### Short Talks

- *Dr. Joseph Agius*, Using the "Ridiculum Curse" in stuttering intervention: Smart intervention strategy
- *Dr. Gudrun Baumgartner*, Always up for joking?
- *Castanar Guillem*, When ethnic goes social: Russian jokes about Georgians and Tajiks
- *Dr. Elaine Anderson*, Lowering the fences- Finding humour with our distant neighbours
- *Natalia Defiel*, Beyond the limits of humor
- *Krita Oumaima*, The humorous exploitation of politics in advertising: The social-acceptability of the hybridization of marketing politics
- *Alex Stahlmann*, Seven years a gelotophobe- Lessons from a longitudinal, idiographic study
- *Kassandra Pineault Savard*, Understanding the use of aggressive humor during adolescence
- *Lisa Linge-Dahl*, Conceptualization of a humour intervention in a palliative care setting
- *Matthew Hilborn*, Pedro Almodóvar: The King of Kitsch?
- *Vladislav Maraev*, What makes (conversational) agents laugh?
- *Andrés Mendiburo*, Cognitive dissonance caused by the use of disparagement humor by politicians
- *Rev. Christine Smaller*, Was Jesus a stand-up comic?

- *Christian Kastner*, Synergies of mindfulness and benevolent humour
- *Florian Fischer*, Effects of medical cabaret on increasing the willingness to donate organs
- *David Callaghan*, Lexical irony markers, ironic signposting and “irony priming”: Can irony be detected at the lexical level?
- *Anastasiya Fiadotava*, Studying family humour through interviews: Practical limitations and possible mitigation strategies

Two Prize winners were chosen to receive a one-year subscription to *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*.

The participants made time for social events. The social program included a welcome meet-up BBQ on the Monday evening, an excursion to Blists Hill Victorian Town Museum and to the World Heritage Iron Bridge organised for Wednesday, with farewell drinks being had by all on Friday evening.

The summer school was supported by The Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing of the University of Wolverhampton and The Cogito Foundation, Switzerland who sponsored the two Swiss lecturers' flights.

Also, our thanks go to Mouton de Gruyter for their support of the Summer School and sponsorship of the symposium prizes for the best presentation awards, which were won this year by: Cassandra Pineault Savard and Oumaïma Krita.

The *International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter* was organized for the first time by Willibald Ruch in 2001 (Queen's University of Belfast). The next successful bid for hosting ISS19 was received from Bonn, Germany. Details will be announced at the summer school website and Facebook pages very soon (<http://www.humoursummerschool.org/>).

This summer school is endorsed by the [International Society for Humor Studies \(ISHS\)](#).

Tracey Platt & Josiane Boutonnet