



Notre Dame Institute for
ADVANCED STUDY

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

“The Biology and Neurology of Laughter and Humor”

Thursday, April 7, 2016 – Afternoon Session (2:30 to 4:15 p.m.)

Moderator



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.

Presenters

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.





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*.

