PROGRAM OF EVENTS *

January 29-31  Topic: New Science, Old Philosophy, and Your Happiness

Public Lecture: Thursday, January 29, 6 p.m., Performing Arts building, room K 125

The great philosopher of classical Greece, Socrates, famously said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Contemporary neuroscience demonstrates the mechanisms that cause this to be so true! Psychologist and author Dr. Anne Benvenuti will introduce the work of affective neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp who has discovered seven affective systems of the brain that are shared by all mammals. These systems are the most fundamental level of motivation for all behavior. The largest of these is the SEEKING system, which includes what is often called the "reward system" but is distinct from it. Dr. Benvenuti will focus on the SEEKING system and its importance for happiness. She will use simple exercises to identify desires and also explore how it is that we can come to "desire" things we don't really want, resulting in the need to examine our motivations with care.

Staff workshops: Self-Knowledge, the Seeking System, and Happiness at Work, Friday, January 30, 9-10:20 am and 10:40-noon, Staff Lounge, Building C.

March 11-13  Topic: Global and Cultural Perspectives on Depression

Public Lecture: Gender Perspectives on Coping and Depression: Strategies for a Better Future. Thursday, March 12, 6 p.m., Location TBA.

Depression is currently the third-ranked non-communicable disease, according to the World Health Organization, and it is expected to be the first-ranked by 2030. Although there are many differences in how depression manifests and is treated around the world, gendered patterns of coping and depression are broadly similar across most cultures, and therefore provide an excellent opportunity for intervention. In this series of events, Dr. Benvenuti will draw from her six years of experience as a member of the United Nations NGO Committee for Mental Health and Education, and her practice and teaching in the field of psychology in order to provide a broad perspective on these issues, inclusive of self-care practices to build resilience and prevent depression.

Staff workshops: Depression as the “Common Cold” of Mental Health: recognizing, responding, and self-treatment. Friday, March 13, 9-10:20 pm and 10:40-noon, Staff Lounge, Building C.

April 16-17  Topic: Spirit Unleashed: Reimagining Human-Animal Relations

Public Lecture: Thursday, April 16, 6 p.m., Location TBA.

This is an interdisciplinary academic monograph, using evolutionary biology, ethology, neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and theology to critique and construct paradigms for understanding human-animal relations. Nominated for 2014 Pulitzer for nonfiction, Orion prize for nonfiction nature writing, PEN Western States literary award.
Staff readings and workshops. Friday, April 17, 9-10:20 pm and 10:40-noon, Staff Lounge, Building C.

Friday, May 29  Educator in Residence Closing Activity

Exact schedule of this culminating visit will be developed over the spring, with input from participants in previous activities. It is anticipated that there will be a public presentation of student creative projects/seekings, with students presenting what arouses their curiosity and interest, what makes them feel alive, what they hope to accomplish, etc.

This event also may include a poetry reading by Dr. Benvenuti.

*Exact times, places, and classes for will be announced at least a week before each visit.