

SPARC

Student Psychology Annual  
Research Conference

10th annual



Psychology Dept.  
University of West Georgia  
April 10, 2008

McCall

## History of SPARC

In order to create a forum for student research, *Student Psychology Annual Research Conference* (SPARC) was inaugurated in the spring of 1999. The spark for SPARC came from graduate students enrolled in a research class during that semester. They wondered if there could be a good place to share and dialogue further about their research. Students then designed, organized and delivered the conference and have continued to for the past nine years. Significantly, this conference was set up not as a competition but instead as a clearing for undergraduate and graduate Psychology students, faculty, and friends to join in a community of learners. SPARC provides a focal point for end of year presentations, a testing ground for new ideas, an opportunity to refine and practice presentation skills, and a celebration of scholarship and creativity. We are very proud of our students; we invite you to jump in and take this time to continue our learning together.



## Welcome

Welcome to SPARC, 2008—our tenth anniversary!!

SPARC is perched at the forward edge of a much broader and ever-expanding domain of psychological inquiry that currently offers some of the richest and most diverse explorations available in contemporary social science. Here there are wide spaces for not only hypothesis testing, but also societal critiques and experiential endeavors, just as there are clearings for literary, artistic and dramatic expressions. This year's cohort of burgeoning scholars in the University of West Georgia's Psychology department have once again courageously stepped into this space, engaging in a variety of diverse projects, including work on human emotions, substance abuse, the poetry of grief work, autism and embodiment, and gender role development, to name a few. In so doing, they invite cross-fertilization, catalytic dialogues, and a prevailing sense of participation in a living revolution. What surges in these spaces are waves of theoretical, meta-theoretical, and methodological curiosities that sweep, with enthusiasm, creativity, and intellectual ferment, into the harbors of this community and beyond. Emerging in this wake are bold invitations to journey into a humanism marked by *creative wholeness*. Researching holistically promotes a unity of knowledge and imagination, syncing heart and mind in an effort to glimpse the human condition with rigorous clarity and unflagging compassion. Our gift and calling as human science researchers is to hold life up in this way, by whatever gifts we have of imagination, rigor, and eloquence so as to create images of the human condition through which we can see ourselves and one another. This way of knowing is our calling. It thrives with our participation no less in the acts of living and in the vagaries of human connectedness than it does in the reflexive and scholarly disquisitions of critical appraisal. Besides thanking you for being a part of this gathering, we hope that every one of you enjoy, and benefit from, both the substance and spirit of SPARC.



## SPARC 2008: Conference Schedule

<b>Time</b>	<b>Melson 104</b>	<b>Melson 207</b>	<b>Melson 218</b>
1:00 – 1:15	<b>Paige Bagwell</b> Male Gender Stereotypes	<b>Will Kerr</b> <i>The Religion of Self: Theistic Metaphors in Psychology</i>	<b>Lisa Leonard</b> <i>Explorations into How the Knowledge of a Loved One's Fate...</i>
1:20 – 1:35	<b>Jeff Walker</b> Two-Spirits among the Native American Tribes	<b>Louis Boynton</b> <i>Psychology of Flourishing</i>	<b>Laura Garcia</b> <i>Autism and Embodiment</i>
1:40 – 1:55	<b>Ashleigh “Brooke” Ayers</b> Constructing Theories on Human Emotion	<b>Kimberly Prince</b> <i>Loss and Grief: A Poetic Endeavor</i>	<b>Jennifer Gordon</b> <i>What is in a Complaint?</i>
2:00 – 2:15	<b>Jasmine Stills</b> What has the Greatest Effect on our Emotions?	<b>Dryden Driggers</b> <i>Adult or Not? A Qualitative Study of the Transition from Adolescence...</i>	<b>Martha Gibson</b> <i>The Changing Face of Grandmother</i>
2:20 – 2:35	<b>Kristen Scarborough</b> What Makes an Addiction an Addiction and How It Can Be Treated	<b>Rob Cash, Julie Auberger, Melinda Kantor, &amp; Louis Boynton</b> <i>Student Practicum Information Panel</i>	<b>Meredith Jones, Julie Byrum, Bryan Bramlett and Nakisha Carrasquillo</b> <i>Meditation and Anxiety</i>
2:40 – 2:55	<b>John Barrett</b> The Master's Collection	<b>Jennifer Elizabeth Hand</b> <i>Substance Abuse Disorders: Treatment Instead of Incarceration</i>	<b>Nakisha Carrasquillo</b> <i>Expectations and Experiences of Beginning Meditators</i>
3:00 – 3:15	<b>Carleeza Garrett</b> The Realm of the Possible: HOPE	<b>Kevin Winters</b> <i>Embodying Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology</i>	<b>Kate Brady</b> <i>Discourse That Becomes a President</i>
3:20 – 3:35	<b>Christina Pike</b> Factors That Contribute to Women's Self Esteem	<b>Brandon Grant</b> <i>Plato and Psychology</i>	<b>Melinda Kantor</b> <i>Female Leadership Talk</i>
3:40 – 3:55	<b>Quencina Gardner-Hyde</b> Women in Religion	<b>Sangeeta Dave</b> <i>My Journey Through the Program</i>	<b>Craig Witcher</b> <i>An Ethnography of Suwanee Spring Fest</i>
4:00 – 4:15	<b>Miranda Byrd</b> Humanistic Psychologists: Left-brained or Right-brained?	<b>Jason Andrew Gaskins</b> <i>Cycle of Abuse</i>	<b>Cecelia Nathan</b> <i>Motivational Psychology</i>
4:20 – 4:35			<b>Elizabeth Murray</b> <i>Search for Autonomy</i>

**Ashleigh “Brooke” Ayers*****Constructing Theories on Human Emotion***

Those outside academia tend to consider human emotion as an affective subjective response, commonly referred to as feelings. Based on compilations of various psychological perspectives and scholars, I will discuss human emotion from a multidimensional viewpoint. In addition to the subjective feeling aspect of emotion, I will discuss evolutionary, universality and culture, elicitation by stimuli, temporal components, cognitive appraisals, physiological responses, and manifested behaviors. I will use the emotion of “embarrassment” to map out this concept of human emotion in its entirety, referring to scholars such as Peter Bertocci, Nico H. Frijda, Jaak Panksepp, and Robert Plutchik. [Ahiggin1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Ahiggin1@my.westga.edu)

**Paige Bagwell*****Male Gender Stereotypes***

A follow-up presentation over the research I did previously on gender stereotypes and how they have changed over the last several generations. I interviewed three generations of men because last time I noticed the most changes across the generations of men in the first study, so I followed up and explored when that change occurred as well as what types of stereotypes were changing over gender issues. [paige@fardreamer.net](mailto:paige@fardreamer.net)

**John Barrett*****The Master’s Collection***

Judge Daniel Paul Schreber’s *Memoirs*, taken-up by Freud for analysis, is an intriguing anomaly illuminating the time and place of its creation. Schreber continues to garner attention. Eric Santner, in his article *States of Emergency: Toward a Freudian Historiography of Modernity*, describes “symbolic investiture” as the concept eluding Judge Schreber that ultimately caused his illness. The failure of *symbolic investiture* Schreber experienced coincides with changes in Western culture during his lifetime. This SPARC presentation seeks to illuminate shifts in artistic symbols of investiture from the Byzantine period into the twentieth century. [barrett.john@mindspring.com](mailto:barrett.john@mindspring.com)

**Louis Boynton*****Psychology of Flourishing***

This is a presentation of research related to bringing Aristotle’s concepts of holism and ethics into the therapy session. This research suggests that Aristotle’s concepts of character, virtue and the good life can be applied to and can actually provide an alternative to the current value-free space offered in therapy today. This presentation is an examination of the possibilities of applying these ideas to psychotherapy. This could provide the psychotherapist an opportunity to bring ethics and the concept flourishing into our demarcated therapeutic space, providing a new healing ritual with mutual expectations of hope. [Lboynto1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Lboynto1@my.westga.edu)

**Kate Brady*****Discourse That Becomes a President***

In the current political campaigns for president, issues of the middle class are a common point of focus for both Senators Clinton and Obama. Given this, I will look at the way recent immigrants are discussed in the democratic political discourse to see if we can see the persistent othering, the holding of the ground of privilege that supports the audience’s confidence that their place, their values, and their status is safe and advocated for by their candidate. This project will be grounded in the literature on power, political rhetoric and critical discourse analysis. [bradykate@yahoo.com](mailto:bradykate@yahoo.com)

**Miranda Byrd*****Humanistic Psychologists: “Left-brained” or “Right-brained”?***

My research is on-going. I will be distributing short batteries to UWG psychology faculty and graduate students to determine if affiliation with a humanistic psychology department makes one prone to left-directed or right-directed thinking. I hypothesize that those from a humanistic program are more directed in their thinking toward the right side of the brain. [Mbyrd1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Mbyrd1@my.westga.edu)

**Rob Cash, Julie Auberger, Melinda Kantor, & Louis Boynton*****Student Practicum Information Panel***

Graduate students currently in practicum will share their experiences related to the process of preparing academically, mentorship interviews, choosing the work sites, choosing populations to become engaged with and the many ethical dilemmas that are involved in the clinical practicum experience. Student panelists also will offer a brief phenomenological description of the intersection of theory and clinical application at each site. This presentation invites all interested parties to come with questions, desires, wishes, and fears about future clinical growth opportunities as they relate to the clinical practicum experience. [Lboynto1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Lboynto1@my.westga.edu)

**Nakisha Carrasquillo*****Expectations and Experiences of Beginning Meditators***

For this presentation I have interviewed several people who have started a new meditation practice. It consists of interviews about what benefits and values people expect to get out of a new practice and how they describe significant experiences during the 6 week practice. There are three different types of meditation that the participants are using (mindfulness, compassion and transcendental). I will be doing a grounded theory to see if there are similar or different expectations and experiences across participants. In all I hope to see what value beginning mediators place on a new meditation practice. [ncarrasquillo@gmail.com](mailto:ncarrasquillo@gmail.com)

**Sangeeta Dave*****My Journey Through the Program***

I will present on my academic and personal growth through the master's program here. There are many questions I had coming in, particularly about peak experiences and depression. I would like to discuss how those questions danced with my studies here. I will summarize and loop together the various academic tools that have danced with my questions and have influenced me. I will also discuss how these interweaved with my personal and community life at West Georgia. [lady.god.diva@gmail.com](mailto:lady.god.diva@gmail.com)

**Dryden Driggers*****Adult or Not? A Qualitative Study of the Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood***

This study delves into 20+ interviews with young adults about their experiences dealing with major transitions and decisions they face in their 20’s. It uses qualitative data to investigate relationships, identity explorations, independence, fears, hopes, and the future. It also reviews and discusses the literature surrounding this new period that developmental researchers call “emerging adulthood” and the stereotypes that surround this generation. [drydenrose@yahoo.com](mailto:drydenrose@yahoo.com)

**Laura Garcia*****Autism and Embodiment***

My research interests are autism and embodiment. The question I intend to address is, “If one were to conduct a study on ‘embodiment’ and ‘autism’ how would one go about it?” My presentation will consist of a brief overview of my preliminary groundwork for a research endeavor focused on these interests. I intend to present the beginnings of my research which has heretofore consisted of attempts to clarify involved concepts, hone my research question, and select an apt method. [Lsg216@yahoo.com](mailto:Lsg216@yahoo.com)

**Quencina Gardner-Hyde*****Women in Religion***

Before a major movement we find a group who becomes dissatisfied with the status quo. Women have endured discrimination from the major systems that control society. The ideologies behind these systems support subordination of women. This research paper will focus on women in religion. The focus would be on the Apostle Paul and his writings. I will examine his writings and the misinterpretation of scripture. [qgardne1@my.westga.edu](mailto:qgardne1@my.westga.edu)



**Carleeza Garrett*****The Realm of the Possible: HOPE***

During the loco motor period in life, an individual's imagination is at its most vivid and eruptive state. It is at this time that the individual can become open to the realm of the possible. How then is this realm determined? My belief is that it is in one's ability to hope. Hope, defined as a "general feeling that some desire will be fulfilled", can determine the domain in which something is dominant in an individual's life. I will discuss how an individual's ability to hope can affect their daily life when positive psychological development has not been met during the first stage of life.

[Asu\\_cgarretti15@yahoo.com](mailto:Asu_cgarretti15@yahoo.com)

**Jason Andrew Gaskins*****Cycle of Abuse***

I will discuss the symptoms of addiction and dependence and also tolerance and withdrawal for the major classes of drugs (hallucinogens, depressants, stimulants, and opioids). I will explain how each class affects the brain as well as the psychological effects. I will also discuss how various drugs affect the user's emotional state. Some drugs create anxiety or depression; cognitively, acid flashbacks and cognitive deterioration can occur. Finally, I will discuss different behaviors that maintain addiction. [Jgaskin1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Jgaskin1@my.westga.edu)

**Martha Gibson*****The Changing Face of Grandmother***

This research examines how the cultural identity of grandmothers has changed in the last fifty years. Remembrances and stories of grandmothers were collected from people of different age groups to contrast the portraits created by the analysis of the granny stories of past and present to reveal the changing face of "grandmother". This research will attempt to identify changes in cultural gender norms that have influenced this change by examining the literature on aging and gender. Possible results of these findings might alter the traditional perceptions of grandmotherly behavior to reveal a more nuanced view. [Marta355@yahoo.com](mailto:Marta355@yahoo.com)

**Jennifer Gordon*****What is in a Complaint?***

I am interested in pursuing the topic of job complaints. I will look into the themes that cause people to complain in the office/corporate setting. My question is: What general themes are present in complaints about jobs? I will use grounded theory as my method. I am interested in what keeps a person in a job that leads to confusion, frustration, and other factors. This topic is of interest to me because I could be entering a supervisory position where proper motivation is important.

[jgordon@westga.edu](mailto:jgordon@westga.edu)

**Brandon Grant*****Plato and Psychology***

When looking at the works of Plato and Socrates, their major focus was to discover the nature of the "virtues". These virtues, which were courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom are very important to psychologists and lay persons. The methods used in Socrates' and Plato's dialectics were very much in line with cognitive psychology. Determining the nature of these virtues could thus be very useful for helping clients in therapy. [Bgrant1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Bgrant1@my.westga.edu)

**Jennifer Elizabeth Hand*****Substance Abuse Disorders: Treatment Instead of incarceration***

I will discuss treatment rather than incarceration for substance abuse disorder sufferers. From a humanistic perspective, incarceration for a substance abuse sufferer might complicate progression through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, thereby stunting personal growth. It is also possible that exposure to violent prisoners might reinforce violent behaviors. In consideration of the high failure rate, it is apparent that current treatment strategies require reform. My proposal includes a humanistic-focused rehabilitation approach that encourages personal development and the acquisition of healthier coping and interpersonal skills as well as a structured and supervised release into the community. [Jhand2@my.westga.edu](mailto:Jhand2@my.westga.edu)

**Meredith Jones, Julie Byrum, Bryan Bramlett and Nakisha Carrasquillo*****Meditation and Anxiety***

This presentation is about the research project currently being conducted at the neuroscience research lab in the psychology department. We describe the study and review our measures of anxiety. We will present a description of EEG and heart rate coherence. We will describe the three types of meditation that we are using in our study from an experiential and physiological standpoint. We will also discuss the physiology of anxiety and how the EEG and heart rate coherence can show a reduction in anxiety over time. Finally, we will ask if there is anyone interested in getting research experience next semester. [ncarrasquillo@gmail.com](mailto:ncarrasquillo@gmail.com)

**Melinda Kantor*****Female Leadership Talk***

Using Grounded Theory as an analysis and Goffman's framing concepts as a tool to review the data, this presentation will provide some insights into how female leaders talk when providing encouragement during actual mentoring sessions. Recorded excerpts and supplemental readings will assist in demonstrating some emergent themes that are ironic and anti-feminist in nature while paradoxically supporting the development of women in leadership positions.

[englishkantor@earthlink.net](mailto:englishkantor@earthlink.net)

**Will Kerr*****The Religion of Self – Theistic Metaphors in Psychology***

The presentation will frame theories of self within the various major religion traditions (monotheism, polytheism, etc.) with the hope that looking at these various frameworks may inspire growth, or at very least, allow us to more critically engage with the metaphors we use in constructing our own conception of self. [djphatmann@comcast.net](mailto:djphatmann@comcast.net)

**Lisa Leonard*****Explorations into How the Knowledge of a Loved One's Fate Affects Their Family***

This presentation of research is an exploration into the lived experiences of individuals who have lost, or are in the process of losing, an immediate family member to a life threatening illness. This research suggests that there are some commonalities amongst individuals struggling with the loss of a relative, while also examining some of the differences in which individuals react to the life altering news. The purpose of this research is to better understand the similarities and differences of this type of experience in order to provide family members and their loved ones more focused assistance through this process. [lleonari@my.westga.edu](mailto:lleonari@my.westga.edu)

**Elizabeth Murray*****Search for Autonomy***

I'm interviewing people about their experience on becoming a fully autonomous person by asking them to tell me in their own words about their transition from being a child dependent on their parents or guardians to an independent adult. I prefaced their stories by asking them about what their experiences were growing up (semi-independence) and how they dealt or deal with taking on more responsibility as independent young adults and everything that comes with it. The participants are young adults in a college environment. [emurray2@my.westga.edu](mailto:emurray2@my.westga.edu)

**Cecelia Nathan*****Motivational Psychology***

Motivational speakers often hold audiences captive in the delivery of their motivational messages. A connection of some sort appears to form between the speaker and his or her audience that motivates or inspires the listener onward. How "motivating" is done seems to be akin to many of the aspects embedded in humanistic psychology. The purpose of my research is to examine theme(s) emerging from motivational speeches. In recognizing these themes, possible long range implications can be seen as they are used to strengthen and empower the individual.

[funcn1@aol.com](mailto:funcn1@aol.com)



## SPARC Abstracts

**Christina Pike*****Factors That Contribute to Women's Self Esteem***

My presentation deals with factors that contribute to women having low self esteem. My research explores the effect of stories that mothers read daughters, especially fairy tales and roles women play in them. I also looked at fathers and the daughters they produce. My paper goes on to look at the shift of how women are viewed in ads from an image of respect to a mere object. I also connect all these factors to the rise of anorexia and bulimia and how it is trickling down to younger and younger girls. [Cpike230@aol.com](mailto:Cpike230@aol.com)

**Kimberly Prince*****Loss and Grief: A Poetic Endeavor***

I would like to offer a brief introduction to my thesis research on the psychological function of poetry in grieving. I am exploring the therapeutic potential of poems of loss and grief. For this presentation, I will share some of the poems I have discovered and explore the ways we create meaning and relationality through the intimate articulation of moments lived in poetry. I hope to learn from the questions, insights, and musings that emerge in the group as we listen and respond to select poems. Perhaps we will imaginatively enter the landscape of loss and letting go, and see where the dialogue leads us. [kpsheprince@yahoo.com](mailto:kpsheprince@yahoo.com)

**Kristen Scarborough*****What Makes an Addiction an Addiction and How It Can Be Treated***

This is a presentation of my findings on two themes concerning addiction. The first theme to be explored is what makes an addiction an addiction. This section explains the characteristics of what effects an addiction has on the person as well as what differentiates the behaviors of an addict from the behaviors of a non-addict. The second theme is the treatment modalities for addictive behaviors. This section focuses on cognitive and behavioral therapy. [kscarbo2@my.westga.edu](mailto:kscarbo2@my.westga.edu)

**Jasmine Stills*****What has the Greatest Effect on our Emotions?***

My presentation describes my study on the psychology of emotions and what has the greatest effect on our emotions as well as what causes them. I did a study on three different women at different time periods of their lives and asked them to keep a log paying close attention to their emotions for one week. I found that there are actually many things that play a part in our emotions. For my presentation I have come up with a few main points as to what led these women to have certain emotions throughout their day. Possible future research will be discussed. [Jstills1@my.westga.edu](mailto:Jstills1@my.westga.edu)

**Jeff Walker*****Two-Spirits among the Native American Tribes***

This presentation will give a general overview of the Two-Spirit gender of some Native Americans. It will cover such things as how people of this gender are realized, the qualities that they possess and are attributed to them, as well as aspect of mythic origins of the gender. It will also discuss the roles Two-Spirit individuals play within the societies they live in, the diversity within some of the aspects of their lives, and term used to refer to this aspect of the Native American way of life. [Jwalker5@my.westga.edu](mailto:Jwalker5@my.westga.edu)

**Kevin Winters*****Embodying Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology***

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (hereafter CBT) is one of the dominant therapeutic paradigms in our time. With its focus on cognition, however, CBT virtually ignores the body and its role in human existence. My thesis will be a philosophical analysis of CBT through the question of the body's role in human existence. I will focus on Aaron Beck's CBT model and will use depression as the target psychological phenomenon by which to compare Beck's model with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment. This thesis is not meant as a refutation of CBT, but an attempt to find those structures of active embodiment that essentially undergird and gives meaning to cognition as understood by CBT. [metatron99@hotmail.com](mailto:metatron99@hotmail.com)

**Craig Witcher*****An Ethnography of Suwanee Spring Fest***

The purpose of this paper is to provide an in-depth description of what it means to be a participant of the Suwanee Spring Fest. The festival, which takes place outside of Live Oak, Florida, features the music of various bluegrass and Americana artists from around the world. The goal in writing this paper from a first-person perspective is to give a rich example of what life is like for the three days in which this festival takes place. I will be giving accounts of what people are doing along with why and how they are doing what they do in this particular context. [craig.witcher@gmail.com](mailto:craig.witcher@gmail.com)

Thank You to All of the Members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual SPARC Committee.

A Special Thank You to

Curt Arey, AJ Jackson, and Kate Hendricks for  
their impressive student leadership  
and to Dr. Neill Korobov  
for organizing SPARC '08

We Would Also Like to Thank Our Sponsors for Their Generous Donations:

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This year's SPARC is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Mike Arons

The night is dark,  
But what of that?  
That's home as well  
Old Alley Cat.

You've done your work  
And worth a grin,  
A passing tear,  
A slug of gin,

And wait,  
The tricks all turned,  
The moment pure  
Now dearly earned.

from *Mating of the Gods*  
by Mike Arons

