



▶ **PROF. CHERYL HARASYMCHUK**  
LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST  
BOREDOM...

○ ISSUE III | ○ VOLUME I | ○ NOVEMBER 2011



▶ **PROF. MATTHEW HOLAHAN**  
BRAINS ON THE MIND...



▶ **Did You Know...?**  
CUOL NOVEMBER CHALLENGE  
IS UNDERWAY.

# Online focus

WELCOME TO THE THIRD ISSUE OF THE CUOL NEWSLETTER!

CUOL is bringing on the facial hair this November - and not just for winter warmth! See inside this month's newsletter for details on how you can join the cause.

## Leading the fight against boredom: Cheryl Harasymchuk

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*In both her research and her classrooms, Cheryl Harasymchuk brings zeal and fascination to academics.*

If you remove the conflict from a relationship, it doesn't necessarily equal a happy romance. People get bored. The fire fizzles. CUOL professor Cheryl Harasymchuk is trying to find out why.

As a social psychologist, she is interested in how cues from the environment shape how we act, think and feel. Her research zeroes in on relational boredom, and how that can lead to greater break-up rates. Almost a decade ago, at a time when most people were villainizing conflict, Harasymchuk noticed that even with no fights, a relationship sometimes appeared to be flat and directionless. Using a bottom-up approach, she asked couples what relationship boredom meant to them (feels like a chore, excitement lost, etc.).

In the seven years that she's been studying the subject, she has published a few papers on it, from symptoms to a scale of severity. In future research she plans to "measure" relationship boredom by seeing how it can affect the couple's behaviour, such as engaging in exciting activities or resolving conflict.

Harasymchuk doesn't seem like the kind to study boredom. She's bubbly, with an easy laugh and infectious enthusiasm. This is her second year of teaching at Carleton, but her first time teaching a CUOL course, and Harasymchuk said she was happy to have the summer to prepare for the new style.

Practicing in front of a mirror, she said she would run over the material enough times to make sure she knew the information by heart and would be able to comfortably move around the classroom, answer questions on camera and pay attention to the delivery of the material. "I think overall it turns out to be a better class." She said it helped to think of a talk show, where the focus is on bringing in the viewer with interesting examples.

As for the class itself (this semester it's called research methods in psychology), she expects a lot of students enroll thinking it will be really dry and boring. "We're talking about how to set up a study," she said. Not the most riveting content, but she animates the material. On RateMyProfessors.com, the majority of the reviews cast her as a good quality prof who makes class fun.



**Cheryl Harasymchuk**

*Prof. Harasymchuk teaches a CUOL course,  
NEUR/PSYC 2001*

"My experience so far is very positive. I am excited to go to class, to teach this material. And part of that is the fact that it is being recorded so it just amps you up a bit more, and the students benefit from my added excitement."



## CUOL Newsletter

**Reporter/Writer:**

*Sabrina Doyle*

**Contributors:**

*Maria Brocklehurst | Patrick Lyons | Nestor Querido*

# Brains on the mind: CUOL welcomes Neuroscience Prof



**Matthew Holahan**

*Prof. Holahan teaches a CUOL course,  
NEUR/PSYC 2200*

*It's been a busy year so far for Matthew Holahan, but a good one, as he looks forward to another semester of online teaching.*

Matthew Holahan places a skull on the table in front of him. The top is sliced off, right above where the ear should be, leaving the coiled brains exposed and unprotected. Holahan reaches in and picks up the brain. He likes to help students by giving them a visual of what they're discussing in class, Holahan said. Holahan, a Carleton neuroscience professor, employs the fake, plastic skull as one of many in-class examples he uses throughout the year.

This year is his first year teaching a CUOL course, but his fifth teaching at Carleton. It's also the first year that Carleton officially started its neuroscience department, for which he is the undergraduate chair. In addition, he heads his own research lab, overseeing five graduate students, and is the chair of the animal care committee in Carleton University's Research Office.

In his office, the walls are colourful with poster-sized paintings made by his three kids. A giant whiteboard is covered in various complex-looking formulas and doodles of rat brains and cell pathways. The room is filled with thick books, green potted plants, and various other decorative touches (including a photograph of the inner workings of his own eyeball); but everything is organized and has a place, Holahan said.

Still, he admits it's been a busy year so far. With the CUOL course came 160 extra students, and Holahan said that he had to re-examine his own teaching methods so that he could be as effective on-screen as he is in person.

For example, he had to give up using his laser pointer, which the online students would clearly not be able to follow. He watches pieces of all his lectures, and thinks his presentation skills have improved as a result. "Usually when I lecture I go really fast. This slows me down."

Bringing in the props helps too. With the plastic brain (which is sectioned into four quarters), he's able to show where a particular disease might be located. He's also brought in and cut open a rat's brain in class for comparison, which the overhead camera is able to zoom in on for online students.

He put a question on the midterm asking for feedback on how students thought the course was going, and said he is eager to read what students have to say.



## My Worst Procrastination Story

"I've had to hand in assignments that were started and completed on the morning of the due date. I've ended up saving, printing, and stapling the assignment, only to sprint to my class to hand it in."

*- Jessica Chin, third-yr journalism & political science*

"I sometimes sleep instead of finishing assignments. It's terrible because it's so easy to justify it by saying I need my eight hours or I won't be able to function the next day."

*- Hilary Roberts, fourth-yr journalism & law*

"When I procrastinate I need to justify it by doing something that can be considered productive, so I'm really keen on cleaning. Most extreme case has entailed scrubbing the kitchen floors, cleaning the washing machine, and vacuuming the furniture."

*- Sarah Varga-Pagliaro, 4th yr communications*



## Beastly Battle for the National Emblem!



Watch the commentary debate between Prof. Michael Runtz and Senator Nicole Eaton. Which is better, Beaver or Bear? You can view the debate at <http://tinyurl.com/cv7a3zf>

Also, watch the CTV National News on Friday, October 28 at <http://tinyurl.com/d6fbsk3>

### Share your worst!

Email [sabrina\\_doyle@carleton.ca](mailto:sabrina_doyle@carleton.ca) or [nestor\\_querido@carleton.ca](mailto:nestor_querido@carleton.ca) with the subject line **myworst** and tell us about your worst procrastination story; you might get published in our next CUOL newsletter.





## Mobile Apps

This month's feature:  
*Flash Card Maker Pro*



Feeling bogged down with 2-foot-high stacks of study notes? There's an app for that. Android phone users can get an app that allows the student - or anyone, really - to make and organize as many study notes as he or she desires.

Flash Card Maker Pro has been ranked as one of the top educational apps by national technological, educational and health organizations such as Mashable, eSchool News and BrainLine. It is a multi-sensory tool that was designed to be simple and easy to use. It also has over 5,000 users.

Not only does the electronic version save paper, but it also saves space and immortalizes the notes (presuming of course that you don't toss your phone into a cup of coffee). Say you're waiting at the bus stop. You are much more likely to have your phone conveniently in your pocket and able to whip out for a quick study refresher, rather than the bundle of cue cards squished at the bottom of your backpack, somewhere between your chemistry textbook and yesterday's lunch.

At \$4.95 the app is a little pricier than your average game of Tetris, but when a pack of index cards from Staples is \$4.55, the extra forty cents might be worth it.

Some features of Flash Card Maker Pro:

- Advanced gesturing and text-to-speech technology
- Built-in timer
- Instantaneously sort all your cards in any order
- Unlimited number of cards
- "shake-to-hide" feature
- The ability to share decks of cards with friends who also have the app
- Can create or convert flash cards on the computer and download to your phone later

# The CUOL Movember Challenge!



*The CUOL Movember challenge is a competition between CUOL course Instructors to see which one can raise the most funds per student.*

**Susan Braedley - SOWK 1000**

I am involved in Movember for three reasons. First my long-time pal, Canadian singer-songwriter Don Bray just had surgery for prostate cancer last week. He is the latest of a long line of men in my life who have prostate cancer. Don's prognosis is good, thanks to early detection. Not everyone I know has been so lucky. Second, peer pressure isn't only for students! My CUOL colleagues are a pretty amazing crowd and I'm just trying to stay even with the pack by taking on this challenge. Third, my Social Work students inspire me. They want to change the world for the better, in big ways and small. They want to contribute. So here is something we can do together to contribute to one great cause.

**Pam Wolff - ISCI 2000**

My motivation in participating in the Movember challenge (aside from the fact that it's a good cause - most causes are...) that I'm hoping that it will bring my students together and allow the TV section students to interact with the live section students on some level. I don't know if it actually will accomplish that, but whether it does or not, we'll have raised at least some money for a good cause! My students won't get to see me grow a cheesy mustache... so I might as well give them the chance to try to have my head shaved.

**Christopher Motz - PSYC 1001; 2600**

Why participate in Movember? To quote my favourite headmaster "Eternal Glory!" and supporting research to end prostate cancer is cool too. Also, I want to crush Bob Burk.

**Zeba Crook - RELI 1710**

"to be HUMILIATED, utterly humiliated, by my students! The serious answer that I felt motivated to create a sense of community among the CUOL T section students who never see each other and thus likely don't feel connected to the class in any way.

**Nandini Sarma - FINS 2105**

Besides feeling a bit in a rut and needing a change (growing a mustache will put some pizzazz back into my humdrum existence), I'm doing this to support all the guys in my life and the lives of my female friends: my husband and sons, my friends, the CUOL staff, my colleagues as well as for all the guys out there whom I have not yet met :-). <= Me with my "Mo".



The winning class gets bragging rights AND will see their Instructor get their head shaved or dyed. In a gesture of solidarity, the Director of CUOL, Patrick Lyons, has also put his hair on the line.

**Matthew Holahan - PSYC/NEUR 2200**

My motivation behind growing a mustache for Movember stems from both my dad and uncle being diagnosed with and succumbing to prostate cancer. My hope is to contribute to cancer awareness, detection and research so that this devastating disease will be cured within the near future. I also find that growing a mustache gives me an excuse to listen to 70's classic rock, drive real fast and drink whiskey - not all at the same time, of course.

**Robert Burk - CHEM 1001/1002**

With great moustache comes great responsibility... Go Team Chemistry!!!!

**Vincent Kazmierski - LAWS 2908**

To bring back the 70's in full effect. Also, cancer sucks rocks. So, given that law professors can't cure cancer (yet), the least we can do is raise funds to help the science geeks get the job done. To support my colleague Melanie's battle royale with breast cancer, I will match the first \$500 raised here with a donation to the breast cancer campaign.

**John Hale - LAWS 3307**

Being the proud and hopefully permanent owner of a healthy prostate, and at the same time the son of a mother who died way too young (52) of cancer, I am motivated to support this cause. Being a lecturer who is constantly encouraging my students to do volunteer work or do runs for causes, it is time for me to put my money, or more accurately your money and my moustache, where my mouth is. I am hoping to place a strong second in this contest, as I do NOT want to have either (a) no hair or (b) purple hair when I appear in the Court of Appeal in December.



# The CUOL Movember Challenge

is a friendly competition between CUOL course Instructors to see which one can raise the most funds per student for the cause.

Movember raises funds and awareness for men's health (specifically prostate cancer) through the development and care of fine moustaches.

The "winning" instructor will have his or her head shaved or dyed as a reward for their hard-working class.



## TO DONATE

- go to <http://ca.movember.com>
- search for CUOL
- choose the instructor you want to support
- make a donation!

You can also donate in cash or by cheque at the CUOL Student Centre, D299 Loeb.

QUESTIONS? Email [cuol@carleton.ca](mailto:cuol@carleton.ca) or call 613-520-4055.