

## November

30th

### Lab Volunteering

#### Forum:

Open to all students. UPA members get in for free.  
5-7PM, Comp Sci B10

## December

6<sup>th</sup>

### Last Day of Classes

The Pie-a-Prof day ☺

25<sup>th</sup> – 31st

### Christmas Break/ Student Hibernation

Week. What is this 'free time' that you speak of?

## January

**Books for Africa:** in conjunction with the Golden Key Society.

22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>

**Psych Week:** a whole week of psych-related fun. Includes a volunteer fair, pubcrawl and more. Details TBA.

## February

**Blood Drive for the Sickle Cell foundation.**

Details TBA. May involve cookies.



**Undergraduate  
Psychology  
Association**

Office: BS P 206D, 206 E  
Email: [upa@ualberta.ca](mailto:upa@ualberta.ca)  
Phone: (780) 492 – 6696  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~upa>

# THE INK BLOT

Gallantly wading through finals: sally forth, brave scholars!



*"Rorschach! What's to become of you?"*

## November - December 2006:

- Ψ Editor's note
- Ψ I know what we did last month...and so should you.
- Ψ What you could be doing right now for grad school
- Ψ Upcoming events
- Ψ Join the UPA: the why, the how, the overall awesomeness of it
- Ψ Message of the Month

## **Editor's note**

Action plan for December: write papers, survive finals, pass courses, sleep. My heart goes out to those who are writing their GREs and completing grad school applications this month as well: fight the good fight! Remember to stay positive and sane.

Easier said than done. At any point during finals, you can find me in the library frantically writing out lists of back-up career plans (ex. army, ostrich farming) in case I fail all my finals and forfeit any chances of grad school. And I'm not alone; eavesdropping shows that around finals, conversations like this feature heavily in the hubbub of the psych part of campus:

Panic-stricken, pink-eyed student: "I'm never going to pass this course. I give up. I'm going to fail. I'm never going to grad school. I'll have to work at McDonalds after I graduate and live in my parents' basement for the rest of my life until I become a crazy senile person with 60 cats." (Sprinkled liberally with profanity. Alcohol may or may not be involved.)

Supportive friend: "Of course you will. It's only your first/second/fourth year. You still have time to work hard and get into grad school. And if that doesn't work, you can do something else instead."

Having been on both sides of this conversation many times, I can honestly say I know how you feel. And you're not alone! We're all a little scared of finals and the future, in general. It's completely normal to panic in the face of a seemingly precarious future. But if you just calm down for a second, you might realize that:

1. At this point, we have at least a week before our first final: not bad!
2. You might be doing a lot better than you think: maybe you haven't read the text yet but you've paid attention in every class and understood the concepts?
3. Your supportive friend is right, there are a lot of other things to do with your psych degree: if your marks aren't up to scratch, maybe that's a sign that grad school might not be for you. In which case, not making it into grad school would be a good thing in the long run, right?
4. Your supportive friend is also right about never being too late to work hard: the year is only half over, and even if you're in your last year, you can still do a make-up year and try again later.

So take a breath, look at the silver lining and go back to those books when you're more grounded. Your life is not over. I repeat, your life is not over. Not clinching that A doesn't equal a cat-lady future.

Good luck on finals, everyone! If you're lacking a supportive friend of your own to soothe your panic, email us and join the UPA: where else would you find a body of supportive fellow psych students?

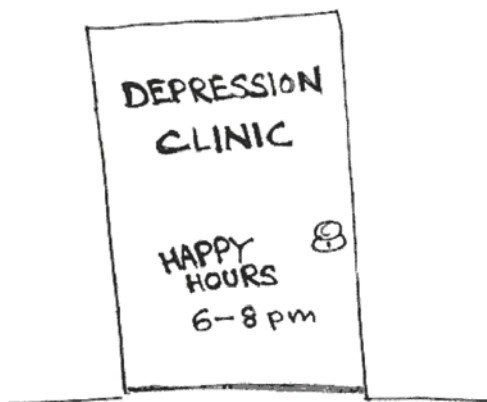
Leigh Yang  
VP Communications

## I know what we did last month October - November recap

Amazing! The **Halloween Bash: Show me your BOO! Bash** boasted an incredible turnout: over a hundred tickets sold! Showers of praise to Michelle the VP Social, for the backbreaking work that made this possible and for setting a new record for UPA social event attendance - triple digits! Photos from the night are available on the website. A shout-out to the **Video iPod** who won our Best Costume contest and walked away with a \$100 bar tab: great stuff. A portion of the proceeds will be going towards the annual **Gay Bisanz Memorial Turkey drive**.

Likewise, the **Grad School forum** was a success: many thanks to Aimee and the academic committee. Thanks to all our speakers as well, students and staff alike, for diverting time from their 10-16 hour workdays to better inform us about grad school. Detailed notes from the forum will be posted on the Members-only section of the website, along with handouts. That's a lot of thanks, but thanks again to everyone involved: it was a tremendously helpful resource for many undergrads. You did a good thing. ☺

It just keeps getting better: the **Smitty** is now equipped with a coffee mill and beans. Huzzah for never having to leave the building to feed your caffeine addiction. Available for everyone's use.



**Patient: Doctor, my wife thinks I'm crazy because I like sausages.**  
**Psychiatrist: Nonsense! I like sausages too.**  
**Patient: Good, you should come and see my collection. I've got hundreds of them.**

### **WWW:**

[http://www.progressiveart.com/gonsalves\\_page.htm](http://www.progressiveart.com/gonsalves_page.htm)

Psychology in art: who'd have thunk? Rob Gonsalves is a Canadian artist whose paintings include elements of magical realism and Gestalt psychology. Think M.C. Escher, but with color and brilliant attention to detail. Like Escher, he plays with perspective and holistic perception in his paintings to produce beautiful optical illusions, but the paintings are more than just clever: imaginative, puzzling, infused with meaning and just plain beautiful to look at, his paintings will literally blow your mind. Great as desktop wallpaper, but even better as a real print on your wall if you can afford it. (\$99 - \$1500, but well worth it.) Unfortunately, there's not much information about him out on the net, not even on Wikipedia or even a personal website. If you find one, let me know. I'm already a huge fan.

Teaser:



## What you should be doing this month:

It's never too early to start planning for your future. As early as your first year, there's a bunch of things you can do to jump-start your career in psychology. This is a regular feature that explains in detail what you can do now and how to go about doing it. Email me with any necessary corrections.

### November/December

#### Identifying your area of interest: do you have one?

Ask a psych student what he's studying. For a first-year, the answer will likely be, "psych 104 and 105 and a bunch of degree requirements." A second year might say, "mostly Arts psychology, but I'm also taking behavior stuff." Ask a fourth year and the response could be something like, "I'm interested in development with an emphasis on the impact and use of the internet in adolescents, and I'm hoping to do graduate research in computer-modulated interaction."

People don't come up with an answer like that in a day. The leap from just studying "psych and stuff" to focusing areas of interest takes time, experience, pondering and such. But don't panic if you're still in a "psych and stuff" stage: that's totally normal for first-and-second, and even some third years! In fact, it'd be best to keep an open mind about a wide range of courses in earlier years to make sure that you're not cheating yourself out of giving everything a chance. You might THINK that your only passion is memory and problem solving: but maybe you'll find out you really enjoy social psychology, too. If you doggedly pursue only one area, you'll be missing out on other facets of the discipline that you might like. Being an undergrad means you can explore a wide variety of courses before settling down to an area: why not take advantage of it? It's like dating lots of girls before you settle down to marry one. Of course, it's different for everyone: something might hit you like a ton of bricks and you might just *know* that it's 'the one'. Or maybe you won't hit it off right away but you'll pursue it so hard that eventually, you come to love it. Either way, trying out many courses/girls will be helpful on some level.

Continuing with another weird metaphor, going through the listing of psych courses in the university calendar is like skimming a menu at a gourmet restaurant: they all sound so good and you just want to take them all. But you're not "gonna catch'em all" because your gastronomic capacity can only take so much, and so can your time table. As psychology majors, we are allowed up to 48 credits in psychology, excluding 104/105, which sounds like a lot – hey, we should be able to take everything we want! But taking on five vastly different psych courses every year presents two problems: you might not have enough room in your time table for other degree requirements, and you can end up with a haphazard mix of courses that are irrelevant to your future area of research. Also, a wide pool of 200- and-300 level courses means that you'll have less room for super-advanced, focused courses at the 400 level, which won't impress grad schools.

But wait, what happened to “keeping an open mind”? A healthy mix of courses is expected, but you will eventually need to define an area to pursue. Grad schools will expect their applicants to be mature scholars who know specifically what they want to study: how can they assign you to a supervisor if you aren’t sure which area to pursue? This is also why your statement of intent is so important. While pigeonholing yourself into a very small area might be a bad idea since it leaves little flexibility in your choice of supervisors, “I’m interested in a little bit of everything” isn’t going to impress anyone. A transcript with a wide smattering of courses might say, “I’m still browsing for something special”, whereas a streamlined course selection with intensive higher-level courses in one area says “I know what I want and I’m devoted to it.”

It’s a fine line. How do you tighten your choices without depriving yourself? A lot of divergence happens on the 200-levels, where you jump from very general 100-level courses to a much wider selection. Think back to 104 and 105: which course did you enjoy more? Which chapters did you enjoy the most? Which did you not enjoy at all? Take that as a reference to choose your 200-levels. Also, browse through the calendar and look at some 300-400 levels: circle or highlight the courses you think you’ll definitely take in the future, and then circle their prerequisites. If forensic psychology is something you really want to try eventually, you need to take personality at some point. For those who are already toying with a certain concentration, take a critical look at your course load for next term. If you’re planning on a research path in perceptions, do you really need that course on personality? On the other hand, would it make sense for you not to take cognition, as they’re so closely related? These are some questions to ask yourself.

### **I’m pretty sure I know what I want. Now what?**

Remember that it doesn’t have to be permanent: a lot of areas in psych are intertwined, so you might be able to cross over to something else at some point. But it’s best to be sure before you commit to one branch: crossing over isn’t always easy, especially if you’re going into something drastically different. Once you’re sure you found something you liked, prepare yourself for advanced-topics courses and maybe plan an independent study in that field.

### **I’ve already done that.**

Super, trooper! You ought to be proud of yourself. May the force be with you. ☺



*“woot.”*

## Upcoming Events

### November-December-January

The **Lab Volunteering/ Individual Studies forum** is slated for **November the 30<sup>th</sup>**. Give Aimee Grover, VP Academic, a heads-up at [grover@ualberta.ca](mailto:grover@ualberta.ca) if you plan on attending. Those of you who attended the grad school forum will know how important lab experience is, so miss at your own discretion. As per usual, UPA members get in for free, and \$1 for non-members.

**Pie-a-Prof** is coming up: most of us are no stranger to this annual event where a collection is taken up for a chance to pie a professor in the face on the last day of class. Organized by the Psych Grad Students' Association, the collectors will drop into your class to pass around a jar for you to donate money toward the **Gay Bisanz Memorial Turkey Drive**. The professor whose class donates the most amount of money will get a pie in the face, but every penny added to the jar will *subtract* a point. Step right up to this golden chance to give to a good cause and topple your instructor's dignity.

For January, the **Golden Key Society** is planning a **Books for Africa** book drive and we're asking for cooperation of UPA members. Drop off any used text books to the Department of Psychology office on the second floor of BioSci by mid-January, where they will be sent to universities, colleges or even high schools in various parts of Africa where textbooks are harder to come by. We're accepting any textbooks published within 5 years and in relatively usable condition. Workbooks not missing pages are also welcome. No paperbacks, journals, or children's books please.

Also planned for the month of January is the UPA's **Psych Week**, a fun and informative week where various psych-related events will be held, including a volunteer fair and a pubcrawl. Details to come, but smells exciting, n'est-ce pas?

Oh, and these things called **finals** that everyone has. (Good luck everyone!)

### Special Announcement

PSYCO 299: OMG The best course ever for you lucky second years!!

The Department has announced a new psych course to be added next fall: PSYCO 299. Similar to BIOL 299, the course is a research opportunity program course that counts for 1.5 credits per term. The student will participate in a supervisor's psychology lab for a term (or two) to earn a pass/fail grade. It's something of a pre-cursor to 496/498 Independent Studies, but with less commitment and normally taken in addition to a full course load. Applicants must find a supervisor on their own – those who showed up to the Independent Studies forum should know lots about this by now. ;) Details will be available on the department website in 2 weeks. You heard it here first.

PSYCO 299 is open to students completed 30-60 credits – sorry third/fourth years! Youngsters, please know that this is an INCREDIBLE opportunity to get some experience in psychology that you normally wouldn't encounter until much much later in your career. I urge you all to consider this and possibly start hunting for supervisors NOW.



## Join the UPA!

### Why?

This is the conversation you are potentially missing out on:

*"I'm taking PSYCO xxx next term."*

*"With Professor bleeeep? Oh yeah, I took that last year."*

*"Really? How was it?"*

*"Wow, what an experience. The one thing you really should know before going into it is tha-----"*

You could be listening to conversations like this all the time if you took the time to connect with other psych students: we can help you.

### How?

Come to BS P 206D during any of our office hours listed below, pay your \$5 membership fee and receive your card!

Office hours listed in the last page

### The Perks:

Free admission into all forums and events!  
(\$1+ for non-members)

Discounted snacks from Skinner's lunchbox!

Chance to volunteer within the UPA and take on leadership roles!

Seek advice from other UPA members on psych-related matters

### WWW....

Look for us on the web, at [www.ualberta.ca/~upa](http://www.ualberta.ca/~upa), for:

- Ψ **The MEMBERS ONLY section:** extra, exclusive information on higher-level psych courses and more to come.
- Ψ **Professor** of the month
- Ψ **Course** of the month
- Ψ **Volunteer agency** of the month

## Volunteer Opportunities



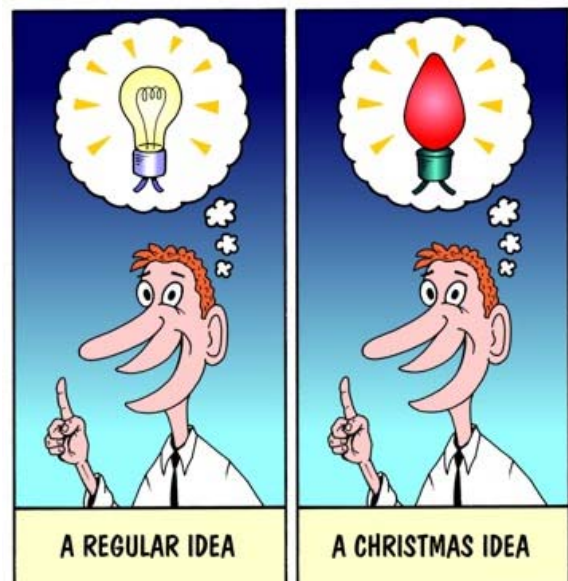
Too much time on your hands? Love psychology? Super-keen to meet people? Well, aren't you in luck!

The UPA is looking for responsible, dedicated individuals for:

### Ψ **Inkblot contributors:**

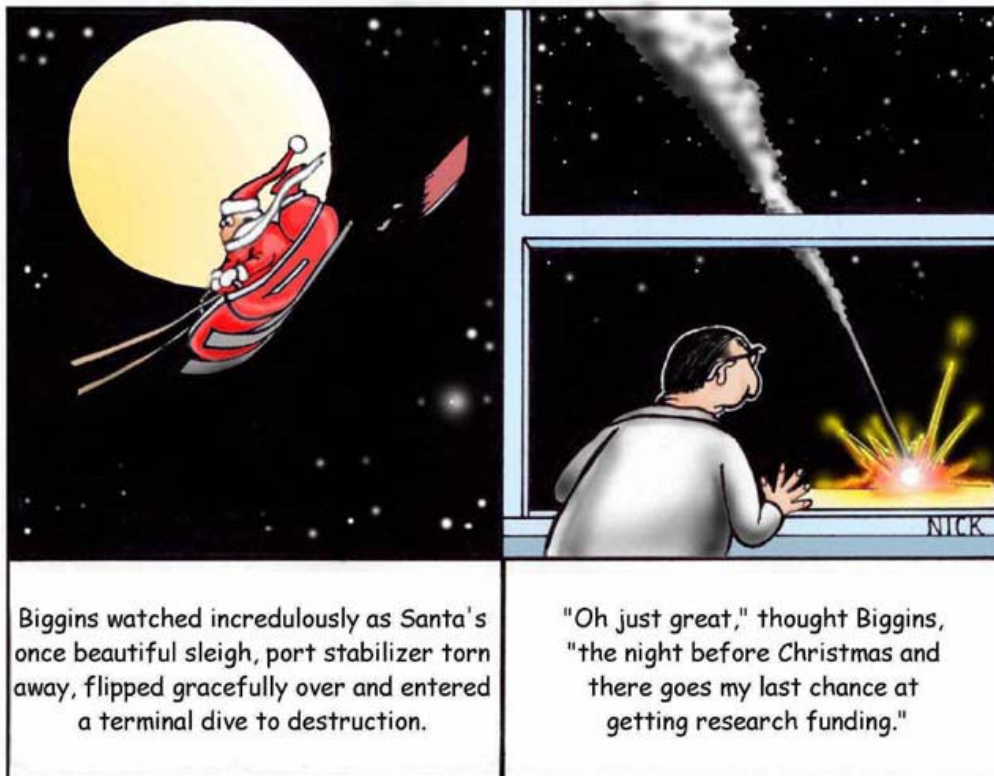
Have you ever picked up a copy of the Inkblot and thought, hmm, this could be so much better? Well, so have I. I'm looking for random contributions and any graphic designer who can make this look more attractive.

Send emails to [myang@ualberta.ca](mailto:myang@ualberta.ca)



## UPA Office hours: Fall term

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 AM	Michelle		Michelle		Michelle
9:00 AM					
10:00 AM					
11:00 AM					
12:00 PM			Vaidehi		
1:00PM	Aimee	Sonia		Sonia	Leigh
2:00PM			Susan		Chris
3:00Pm			Chris		
4:00PM		Leigh		Leigh	
5:00PM			Wing		Wing
6:00PM					
7:00PM					
8:00PM	Susan		Susan		



Biggins watched incredulously as Santa's once beautiful sleigh, port stabilizer torn away, flipped gracefully over and entered a terminal dive to destruction.

"Oh just great," thought Biggins, "the night before Christmas and there goes my last chance at getting research funding."





## **’Twas the Night before Finals**

*’Twas the night before finals, and all through the college,  
the students were praying for last-minute knowledge.*

*Most were quite sleepy but none touched their beds,  
As visions of essays danced through their heads.*

*Out in the taverns, few were still drinking,  
Hoping that liquor would loosen their thinking.*

*In my own apartment, I had been pacing,  
And dreading exams I soon would be facing.*

*I stared at my notes, but my thoughts were muddy,  
My eyes went ablurr, I just couldn't study.*

*"Some pizza might help," I said with a shiver,  
But each place I called refused to deliver.*

*I'd nearly concluded that life was too cruel,  
With futures depending on grades had in school.*

*When all of the sudden, our door opened wide,  
And Patron Saint Put-It-Off ambled inside.*

*His spirit was careless, his manner was mellow,  
He looked all around and he started to bellow.*

*"What kind of student would make such a fuss,  
To toss back at teachers what they tossed at us?"*

*"On Cliffs Notes! On Crib Notes! On Last Year's Exams!  
On Wing it and Sling it, and Last Minute Crams!"*

*His message delivered, he vanished from sight,  
But we heard him exclaiming outside in the night.*

*"Your teachers have pegged you, so just do your best,  
Happy Finals to All, and to all, a good test."*