

Icy Adventures in Microbiology



Photo courtesy of Dr. Roberto Anitori

From one-celled organisms to imaginary elephants, we have much to learn from the non-human life forms around us. That is the theme of this year's season of Clark College's Faculty Speaker Series, "Microbes, Pets, and Puppets: What Animals Can Teach Us."

The series begins on October 30 at 4 p.m., when biology professor Dr. Roberto Anitori presents "Microbial Heroics in Antarctica" in the Ellis Dunn Community Room (Gaiser Hall room 213) on Clark College's main campus.

This presentation is a fascinating exploration of some rarely seen “extremophiles,” microbes that have adapted to survive in places where most living things could not—in this case, the remote and lightless ice caves in an Antarctic volcano. Part travelogue, part scientific presentation, Dr. Anitori invites guests to voyage with him on his 2010 research expedition to Mt. Erebus, the second-highest volcano in Antarctica. Through photos and stories, he will share his experiences training to survive in sub-zero temperatures, as well as his initial findings about the microbes living inside Mt. Erebus’s caves—which could have implications for life in even more difficult-to-research regions, like the deep sea, areas far below the earth’s crust, or even other planets.

“We think these ice caves are models for environments without light,” says Dr. Anitori. “Most life on earth depends on sunlight.”

Instead, these microbes survive on nutrients within the very rock itself—for example, digesting manganese and iron the way other organisms digest biological material. This discovery could, in turn, provide valuable insights into a little-understood aspect of Earth’s ecology.

“Most people, when they think about microbes, they think about things that make you sick—or make yogurt or beer,” says Dr. Anitori. “But 95 percent of the microbes on this planet don’t have anything to do with those things.”

This presentation is free and open to the public. Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event may contact Clark’s Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (video phone) or email dss@clark.edu within one week of the event.

Future Faculty Speaker Series presentations include “Why Do We Need a Pet? Effects of animals on children’s socio-emotional development” and “Bilingual Puppetry: a Project-Based Learning

Exploration.”

About Dr. Roberto Anitori



Dr. Roberto Anitori

Dr. Roberto Anitori has spent many years studying extremophiles and other microbes. After earning both his bachelor's and doctoral degrees in Molecular Biology and Microbiology from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, he worked in research labs at Macquarie University in Sydney and at Oregon Health and Science University. In addition to his work in Antarctica, he has researched extremophiles in other volcanoes, deep-sea vents, underground water tables, deserts, and radioactive hot springs; he wrote the first published description of microbial life in the radioactive Paralana hot spring of Australia. He has been invited to lecture by organizations including the Australian Society for Microbiology, the Geological Society of Australia, and NASA. In 2011, he received the Antarctica Service Medal from the National Science Foundation. Dr. Anitori began teaching microbiology at Clark in 2008 and received a tenure-track faculty appointment in 2013. He is the editor of the book *Extremophiles: Microbiology and Biotechnology* (2012, Horizon Press).

Bright Talents, Dark Tales

Clark College will host award-winning authors Benjamin Percy and Wells Tower in two separate installments of the college's renowned Columbia Writers Series. Percy will read from his work and discuss his writing process on October 21; Tower, on November 3.

This is the first time the series will feature two separate events with different authors during the same quarter. "We've been really fortunate in that the Associated Students of Clark College have supported our efforts to expand this series," says CWS co-director Alexis Nelson, who teaches English at Clark. "Bringing two authors to campus on two different days (and at different times of day) will hopefully allow us to reach a wider audience. I know Clark students can have packed class schedules and often have work and family obligations on top of that, so this gives them more than just one chance to attend a reading this term."

As writers, Percy and Tower have some things in common. Both explore themes of the natural world, violence, fathers and sons, and men struggling with failure and redemption. Both have successful careers in magazine writing as well as in fiction (Percy is a contributing editor at *Esquire*, while Tower is a contributor to *GQ*). Each has two Pushcart Prizes and one Plimpton to his name.

But each writer has a very different voice and style. Tower is known for his depictions of gritty American realism; Percy is perhaps best-known for his most recent novel, *Red Moon*, which author John Irving called a "literary novel about lycanthropes [werewolves]" and which earned praise on Twitter from none other than horror great Stephen King himself.

“Both Percy and Tower are writing fun, energetic stuff and working in multiple genres,” says Nelson. “Percy is a great crossover author, someone who writes literary fiction yet can also attract a wider audience of readers interested in horror, fantasy, or suspense. And I love Tower’s work for how funny and serious it can be at the same time, and for his exuberant and original use of language.”

Benjamin Percy will read at 12:30 p.m. on October 21 in PUB 258C. Wells Tower will read at 2 p.m. on November 3, also in PUB 258C. Both events are free and open to the public.

About Benjamin Percy



Benjamin Percy.
Photo by Jennifer
May.

Benjamin Percy is the author of two novels, *Red Moon*, an IndieNext pick and Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection, and *The Wilding*, winner of the Society of Midland Authors Award for Fiction; as well as two books of stories, *Refresh, Refresh* and *The Language of Elk*. Percy is currently adapting *Red Moon* as a series for FOX TV with Oscar-winner Akiva Goldsman (*A Beautiful Mind*, *I am Legend*, *Winter’s Tale*) and *The Wilding* as a film with director Tanya Wexler (*Hysteria*). Percy’s next novel, *The Dead Lands*, a post-apocalyptic reimagining of the Lewis and Clark saga, is forthcoming in April 2015 with Grand Central. He also has a

craft book, *Thrill Me*, due out by Graywolf Press in 2016.

His fiction and nonfiction have been read on National Public Radio; performed at Symphony Space; and published by *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Time*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, the *Paris Review*, *Tin House*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Orion*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Ploughshares*, *Glimmer Train*, and many other magazines and journals. His honors include a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Whiting Award, the Plimpton Prize, two Pushcart Prizes, and inclusion in *Best American Short Stories* and *Best American Comics*. He writes for DC Comics, and his story "Refresh, Refresh" was adapted into a screenplay by filmmaker James Ponsoldt and a graphic novel by Eisner-nominated artist Danica Novgorodoff.

About Wells Tower



Wells Tower.
Photo courtesy of
the author.

Wells Tower is the author of the short story collection *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned*. His short stories and journalism have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *Harper's Magazine*, *McSweeney's*, *The Paris Review*, *The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, and elsewhere. He received two Pushcart Prizes and the Plimpton Prize from *The Paris Review*. His magazine journalism has been

shortlisted for the National Magazine Awards. He divides his time between Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Brooklyn, New York.

Connect the Numbers on 9/30



The community is invited to help Clark College celebrate the successful completion of the “Ensuring a Bright Future” fundraising campaign on September 30 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Andersen Fountain on the main campus of Clark

College. The family-friendly celebration will include carnival-inspired games and food, as well as presentations by Clark students from a variety of academic fields and at least one big surprise.

When the Clark College Foundation launched the “Ensuring a Bright Future” campaign five years ago, it set its fundraising goal at \$20 million. As has been previously announced, that goal was surpassed—a remarkable feat at any time, but especially during one of the worst economic downturns within living memory, and a testament to the important role Clark College plays in supporting its community. During the September 30 celebration, attendees will learn exactly how much the campaign raised.

The “Ensuring a Bright Future” campaign was launched in 2010 by the Clark College Foundation with the goal of raising \$20 million to help support Clark College in key areas that had been identified by the college, the Clark College Foundation,

and the community. The Clark College Foundation is the separate philanthropic arm of Clark College with the mission of supporting student success and providing funds for program excellence at the college.

This event is free and open to the public. Andersen Fountain is located to the south of Gaiser Hall.

Exceptional Classified Staff Awards



Melissa Williams receives her Exceptional Classified Staff Award during Opening Day 2014.

Opening Day is traditionally the occasion for announcing the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff Awards, which recognize two classified employees for their contributions to Clark College. Recipients receive a glass plaque and \$1,000, funded through an anonymous donor's contributions to the Clark College Foundation.

For their "exemplary work performance, outstanding service to the college, a positive and cooperative spirit, and/or special achievements or contributions to the college," Enrollment Services Program Coordinator Melissa Williams and Facilities Services Custodian Derald Richards were named the winners of the 2014-2015 Clark College Exceptional Classified Staff Awards.



President Knight presents Derald Richards with his Classified Excellence Award.

Derald Richards, Custodian

Derald Richards was described in his nomination as "consistently performing at a level above and beyond the scope of his job."

While Richards is naturally a quiet and retiring person, those who work with him regularly at Clark College at Columbia Tech Center have learned to value his cheerful attitude, helpful

suggestions, and the way he takes pride in everything that is asked of him. One nominator wrote, “He will drop whatever he is doing to assist staff, faculty, or students. No matter how busy he is, he always greets everyone with a smile and never a complaint.”

Another coworker summed Richards up with just two words: “Super Wonderful!!!”



President Knight presents Melissa Williams with her Exceptional Classified Staff Award.

Melissa Williams, Enrollment Services Program Coordinator

Whether they know it or not, probably every student who registers for classes at Clark has been supported in some way or another by Melissa Williams. Her nomination states that she “consistently goes far beyond what is expected of her job title to see that students, faculty, college staff, and the community get what they need. She earnestly engages in students’ experiences at Clark and has helped to create an environment of focused customer service, communication, and teamwork. Her communication skills have been instrumental in explaining policies and procedures, assisting new staff,

keeping her coworkers in the loop when changes occur, and keeping everyone up to date on a daily basis. Her approach, keeping students as the forefront of what we do, has improved and enhanced Clark College's ability to meet the changing needs of our student population. ... In truth, she is the very definition of an exemplary employee."

Other nominees for 2014-2015 were: Scott Coffie, eLearning, Information Technology Specialist 4; Rose Gardner, Administrative Services, Office Assistant 3; Silvia Marinova, Business Technology, Instruction & Classroom Support Technician 2; Vanessa Meyer, Behavioral & Social Sciences, Secretary Senior; Lynn Vanhoomissen, Security & Safety, Program Support Supervisor 1; Jennifer Vernon, Early Childhood Education, Program Specialist 3; and Heather White, Disability Support Services, Program Support Services Supervisor 2.

The Clark College Foundation instituted the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff and quarterly Classified Staff Excellence awards in 1997 to recognize exceptional staff members. Nominations may be submitted by classified, administrative and exempt staff; faculty; students; alumni; retirees; college trustees; and Foundation directors.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Presidential Coins



President Bob Knight introduces the Presidential Coin recipients on Opening Day 2014.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the presidential coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Five Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during Opening Day 2014 on September 10. They were:

Kael Godwin



As a Research and Analytics Professional working within the college's Office of Planning & Effectiveness, Kael Godwin "transforms the way we use data so that we can make better decisions," said President Knight. In his seven years at Clark, Godwin has earned a reputation as someone who's "approachable and responsible ... and will do anything to help the college, even if it is outside his job description."

Knight also cited Godwin's key role in supporting the implementation of the college's new customer relations management software, and noted that many people at the college have remarked upon his strong work ethic and commitment to the college.



Ron Hirt

Fiscal Analyst Ron Hirt began working at Clark College in 1983. In more than 30 years of service, he has become known not just for his daily runs around campus—no matter what the weather—but also for his expertise in finding any kind of information located in the college’s financial management system, regardless of how buried, obscure or complex it is. He has been a key player in many of the financial audits that the college has undergone – and passed, always helping to ensure there are no findings.

“The guy is meticulous,” President Knight said. “You can ask him for any kind of file and he knows right where it is. When I first came to Clark as a vice president, he was one of the people I knew I could go to for help.”

Susan Muir



Student Affairs Administrative Assistant Susan Muir began working at Clark in 2007; through the years, her service to Clark has spanned many areas pertaining to her department, including retention programs, student conduct, behavioral intervention team, and the Veterans Resource Center. “In every situation, she follows through to make sure the students and programs are well-served,” said President Knight. “Her knowledge, skills, and abilities are known across the college

because of her willingness to provide a helping hand.”

Knight added that Muir is known for creating a calm and welcoming environment in her office that helps support students who arrive there in crisis, as well as for being willing to share her time and energy (not to mention her impressive stash of chocolate) with visitors to Student Affairs.



Vicki Cheng

Vicki Cheng, an Administrative Assistant in the Workforce, Career & Technical Education department, has been a Clark employee for 32 years. Her depth of experience is a great asset to her department and allows her to prioritize day-to-day issues effectively.

“She is always willing to step up and assist anyone who walks through the office door with impeccable customer service and a genuine desire to help,” said Knight. “She always makes a point to know and understand the projects across the unit so that she is capable of answering questions that may arise, and often offers suggestions that improve the end product.”

Patti Serrano



Business Administration professor Patti Serrano is no stranger to honors at Clark: She was named one of the college's 2012-2013 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients. "She has been a rock in her division for 33 years and counting," said President Knight. "Through her leadership, she has formally and informally mentored faculty, staff and administrators."

Serrano has been a key participant in such important collegewide efforts as strategic planning, accreditation, and course development. Currently, she is leading her department's efforts to develop a new Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Management. "She is admired and respected by students, faculty, and staff alike," said President Knight.

Exceptional

Faculty,

Exceptional Stories



Clockwise from top left: Kelly Fielding, Chris Martins, Sarah Theberge, and Jim Wilkins-Luton.

A professor who never planned on going to college, A Web-savvy wiz who stays in touch with students on Twitter, an aspiring academic who turned his back on the ivory tower in favor of more hands-on teaching, and an experienced clinician who takes the mystery out of a much-misunderstood subject—these are the recipients of the 2013-2014 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards, which were announced during the college's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially presented to their recipients during Opening Day activities on Sept. 10.

The Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members. This year the award recipients include two full-time tenured professors and two part-time adjunct instructors, whose detailed

biographies can be accessed through the links below:

- Kelly Fielding: The voice of experience
- Chris Martin: The technophile with human feeling
- Sarah Theberge: The accidental professor
- Jim Wilkins-Luton: The book-lover gone digital

The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993. That fund provides recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the college. Nominations can be submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The technophile with human feeling



Chris Martin has gathered the students from his Web Video Production class in the hallway outside their classroom to demonstrate how to set up an interview shot. One student—a burly guy with a baseball cap and gray beard—has affably agreed to stand in front of the camera as the “interviewee.”

“Now let’s think about camera height, because you can change things a lot depending on the angle you shoot your subject at,” Martin says, adjusting the camera’s tripod. “Do we want to set it lower and look up at him to give him that godlike angle? Because we all know Steve has a bit of a god complex—just kidding! Just kidding!”

The whole class, Steve included, cracks up, and then Martin continues, raising the tripod as he speaks. “You can do stuff like that,” he says. “You can look down on them, too. But typically, we want to meet the subject at their own level, to give them that human feeling.”



In many ways, that last line is an apt summation of Martin’s teaching philosophy—and the secret to his popularity with students, who nominated him in droves for Clark’s prestigious 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award.

“His patience and approach in bringing out the abilities in all his students, from the novice to the advanced, encourages respect for all,” wrote one nominator. “His emotional integrity allows him to act as a mentor and to also mirror the importance to students that he is also learning the ever-changing aspects of technology.”

“If you don’t care about who your students are or where they come from or what they actually know—and they know a lot—then you can’t help them,” says Martin, who teaches both Computer Technology and Computer Graphics Technology classes as an adjunct at Clark, as well as general business courses at Warner Pacific College. “What I like about teaching at Clark is you really get to know the students. When they go through hard times, you know about it.”

Martin also gets strong praise for his real-life experience as a web designer and videographer. He has spent more than eight years running his own multimedia studio, creating videos and web content for businesses, nonprofits, and artists. He also produces a regular online documentary video series called *Innovators of Vancouver* that showcases leaders in Southwest Washington.

Martin, who holds a bachelor's degree in Media Arts and Animation from the Art Institute of Portland and a master's degree in Management and Organizational Leadership from Warner Pacific, regularly shares stories from his professional career to illustrate class material. A self-described "big experimenter," he often tries out new tools and methods in his teaching—including Twitter, which Martin has used to create online discussions about class material among his students.

"It's just a way of being accessible," Martins says. "I think it helps students feel connected to me a little more."

Or, to put it another way: It's Martin's way of giving his students that "human feeling" in the digital age.

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

**Exceptional Faculty Award
spotlight: The accidental
professor**



We've all heard the cliché that kids say the darndest things. But people rarely point out its corollary: So do adults. As an Early Childhood Education professor, Sarah Theberge says she is often just as surprised by what her students express in the classroom as she is by what children in the college's Child & Family Studies program say on the playground.

"I'm just surprised over and over again by how many things I hadn't thought of," Theberge says as she stands on that playground surrounded by running children. "The way that students approach the things we talk about reminds me that there's no one right answer to so much of what we're studying. I really do see us as 'co-learners' who are all learning together—and I'm learning right along with them. It's one of my favorite parts of teaching."

It's also one of the things students mentioned repeatedly in nominating Theberge for Clark College's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award, which Theberge received for the

2013-14 year. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10.

"She is honest, she is real, she is not only a teacher but an inspiration and a friend to all her students," wrote one nominator. "She brings passion to her work with children and with her students, and ignites the passion in all of us."

Students also mention Theberge's empathy and her strong commitment to serving as an academic advisor to students in the ECE program. When Theberge explains how she became a professor, it becomes clear why she is able to connect so strongly with her students and empathize with the challenges they face: After all, she faced them too.

Theberge never set out to become a professor. "It was the farthest thing from my mind," she says, laughing. Rather, her initial ambition was much more basic: She needed a job.

"I was a single parent without any college background or schooling, and a friend of mine had a childcare center," Theberge says. "I just thought it was a place where I could have my kids there and still work. But from the very first day, I fell in love with it."

A friend encouraged her to enroll in Clark's ECE program. "I said, 'Oh no. We don't do college in my family,'" Theberge recalls. "She literally took me by the hand and dragged me to Clark. And I've never left."

In 1992, Theberge graduated with honors from Clark with an Associate of Applied Science degree in ECE. She went on to complete both a bachelor's and master's program from Pacific Oaks College while working in Clark's CFS program, first as a program aide and then as an adjunct faculty member. Her roles and responsibilities continued to expand over the years, and in 2000 she was granted tenure at Clark. Throughout the years, she has continued to attend conferences and workshops to keep

up-to-date on current teaching practices in her field. She also presents her own research at conferences; currently she has been delving into the complex issues surrounding children's concepts of gender identity. Additionally, she serves on the board of directors for YWCA Clark County and has been instrumental in creating a library at CFS to help promote children's literacy.

It's a long way from the young single mother who just wanted a job. "That's why I love advising," Theberge says. "I hear similar stories to mine from students—people looking for opportunity, looking for help in making their passion a reality. It's just so rewarding to sit with that and to walk alongside them on their journey."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

**Exceptional Faculty Award
spotlight: The book-lover
gone digital**



Exceptional Faculty Award recipient Jim Wilkins-Luton can tell you the exact moment when the course of his career changed. He was in his final year of graduate studies at Gonzaga University, listening to an English professor discuss Milton in pedantic detail.

At the time, Wilkins-Luton was well on his way to following that professor's path. He'd already been accepted to a Ph.D. program in English literature at Stony Brook University in New York, after which he would aim for a professorship at an elite university where he could happily discuss his own favorite authors in pedantic detail. "It was all lined up," Wilkins-Luton recalls. "I'd been accepted; I had my funding in place; I was going to focus on either medieval or Victorian literature. Everything was going according to plan."

But lately, Wilkins-Luton had begun having doubts about that plan. It started when he took on a part-time job teaching homeless youth to make some money during grad school. "I had

all these stereotypes about what these kids would be like," he says. "I'm ashamed to admit it, but the night before I started the job I was worried they would give me head lice. And then that first day I went to work and came home just exhausted and devastated by these kids. And I started thinking, Maybe the world didn't need another Shakespeare professor. Maybe the world needed people who were willing to teach—to teach the people no one wanted to teach."

Which brings us back to that Milton seminar. Wilkins-Luton found himself staring at the lecturing professor. "I'm not even kidding: This guy actually had leather elbow patches on his tweed jacket, and he was expounding on some particular sentence Milton wrote," he recalls. "And I remember thinking, 'That's my future. I don't want any part of that. What I want to do is help.'"

As fate would have it, there was a poster advertising opportunities to teach English in Japan on the seminar room's walls. Wilkins-Luton called his wife as soon as class let out, and soon after graduation, the two of them moved to Japan, where they spent the next seven years teaching English. Once the couple returned to the U.S. and settled in the Portland area, it was a natural progression for Wilkins-Luton to begin teaching at a private international school, and then English as a Second Language at Clark, and then pre-college and college-level English. He earned tenure in 2006.

Wilkins-Luton says he was surprised and honored to receive a 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10. Student nominators described a professor they called "funny" and "friendly," who "makes all students completely comfortable in the classroom."

"I love to teach," says Wilkins-Luton. "I love the classroom. I love the engagement with students." He is sitting in his

book-lined office at Clark, which amply proves that he hasn't entirely escaped the tropes of the English professor. ("I have a lot more books at home," he admits sheepishly, casting an eye at the seven shelves of volumes arranged in meticulous alphabetical order by author. "These are mostly the ones I don't want my kids reading.")

Yet despite his love of both printed books and face-to-face teaching, Wilkins-Luton recently moved to teaching entirely online. "I think you have to make transitions sometimes to stay sharp," he explains. "Also, I'd been reading some research discussing how the face-to-face classroom favors the extrovert—the person who's willing to raise their hand and speak up in class. In the online environment, the introvert and extrovert become equal. As someone with introvert tendencies of my own, I liked that idea."

Wilkins-Luton says that at first, he was concerned that the online classroom would stifle the sense of humor and personal engagement that he practices in face-to-face teaching. But in fact, he says, online teaching has allowed him to give even more personalized attention to individual students. "If they ask me a question, I send them back a two-paragraph answer," he says. "And yeah, it might have a joke in it. Because you know what? Students don't need gravitas; they need a reason to learn."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Faculty Award spotlight: The voice of experience



“I believe in psychology,” says psychology instructor Kelly Fielding. “I believe it has value and purpose, and if I can affect a few students who want to make a dent in all the psychological distress in this world, then that’s a good thing.”

Fielding has seen first-hand the value of psychology: With almost 30 years of clinical experience as a psychologist, he has helped hundreds of patients cope with psychological distress. He brings this experience into the classroom at Clark College, where he has taught part-time since 1988. “I’m at the point where I’m teaching the children of former students,” he says with a laugh.

There's a reason why parents are recommending Fielding to their kids—he has developed a reputation as an excellent teacher who incorporates personal and professional stories into his teaching. These are some of the qualities that



earned him the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award. The award was announced at Clark's 2014 Commencement ceremony and officially bestowed at the college's Opening Day festivities on September 10.

"I already loved psychology when I went into [Fielding's] course, but after I took his class, I gained a new love for the topic," wrote one student nominator. "He would use storytelling to weave in the actual facts [of the course material], entertaining some students and allowing those students who required a visual aid to learn the material just as well as everyone else."

Fielding, who has a Ph.D. from Brigham Young University, says he enjoys the diversity of Clark students. "I like the population mix," he says. "I like that there are young kids who are still in high school and adult students who are much older than the 'traditional' college student. I think the older students gain from the energy of the younger students, and the younger students gain from the maturity of the older students. The older students, when they come back [to school], they're very serious."

Fielding says he's felt his own teaching style develop as he's grown older—though not necessarily toward the more serious. "I find that I become more and more open," he says. "The younger you are, the more worried you are about judgment. The older I get, the less I find myself being afraid of what students will think if I share a particular idea or story."

Over the years, Fielding says, the theory and practice of psychology has changed as scientists make new discoveries about the human brain. But when it comes to teaching psychology, some things remain constant—such as students' misconceptions about the subject. "They think psychology is about manipulation," he says. "And they have little to no idea how scientific it is. I teach them the scientific method. I show them how studies are conducted. By the time we're done, I think they understand that science is more than chemistry, cells, and physics. But they also understand how those things play into psychology."

Learn more about the other 2013-14 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley