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Boyd Street is taking an academic approach. No one can accuse us of being unbalanced. We're covering who the people on the street have deemed Top Professors. If you've had one of the professors listed, and they gave you a big fat F, I'm sorry; maybe you should've gone to class.

When you think of professors, what comes to mind? Einstein hair, broken glasses, wrinkled papers, some youngster following them around carrying more wrinkled papers. They seem to be in their own little world. Of course, this isn't always the case. Needless to say, they're all highly developed characters -- their own breed. Almost all of them are inspiring and the truly great ones have the potential to impact your life. In my college career, which is almost over (tear), I've met a lot of professors. However, these guys have earned a rep for themselves; that's why they're in here. Not to mention they, like most in their field, are bursting with personality.

There are some great professors out there. I really wish I could profile them all. The ones on the following pages come highly recommended. And to my surprise, *do* return e-mails and phone calls.

by Sarah**Hill**



DR. RYAN BISEL

Assistant Professor of
Organizational Communication

Classes:
Business Communication
Small Group Communication
Organizational Communication

OU Employee since: 2008

Has been here since 2008 because: The outstanding department and university. Also, I really enjoy the midwest; low cost of living and friendly people.

Education from: University of Kansas

What drew you to the field of communication?

I'm very interested in why people do what they do. To put it colloquially, people are weird! Communication attempts to answer the question, "Why do people do what they do?" by figuring out the influential messages they receive. I think that answer has always sounded right to me, on a deeply intuitive level. Also, I believe that relationships are the fundamental basis of a life well lived.

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?
Intense, engaged, and playful.

What do you do if a student does fall asleep?

On the rare occasion that a student looks like they're dozing, I either call on them to keep them focused, try to change to an activity, or pull them aside after class to get the full story.

Favorite movie?

I like movies with ninjas or Jack Black.

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?

I play guitar, bass, and drums; weightlift; play touch football on the weekends; hang out with my wife and newborn daughter.

What do you do during the summertime?

Research. Read. Research. Read. Research.

Drink of choice?

Coke, Newcastle, Sonic limeade, G&T, gimlet, coffee.

What are your future plans, teaching wise?

World domination. No, seriously, I hope to keep adding to the number of undergraduates enrolled in our Organizational Communication undergraduate track. I will be teaching Organizational Communication during the May intercession and Organizational Communication and Small Group Communication in the fall.

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?

A plumber.



DR. JENNIFER HACKNEY

Assistant Professor

Classes:
Introductory Sociology
Social Problems
Social Research Methods
Medical Sociology

OU Employee since: 2002

Has been here since 2002 because: There's no place like home.

Education from:

OU B.A. in psychology, 1989
OU M.A. in sociology, 1993
University of Kansas, Ph.D. in sociology, 2003

Favorite thing to teach under the broad spectrum of sociology, and why?

Intro and social problems are great fun because there are so many freshman and most have never thought about the world sociologically and it's fulfilling to teach them a new world view.

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?

Loud. Passionate. (Attempted) humor.

Favorite movie?

I don't think I could pick just one ... *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (original), *Harold and Maude*, *Evil Dead 1 and 2*, *The Exorcist*, *The Ninth Configuration*. Those are all old, but really, I cannot say a movie is a favorite unless I have continued watching it now and again for at least 20 years.

Favorite book?

I like reading sociological monographs, which is awesome since it's part of my job, but sad in that I'm that nerdy. A guilty pleasure is true crime novels.

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?

Home improvement projects (preferably involving power tools).
Sit on my porch and watch my neighbors and local animal life.
Attend festivals and fairs and other venues where I can people watch.
Play with my pets.

Favorite saying to live by or favorite quote?

If you want to make God laugh, make a plan.

Drink of choice?

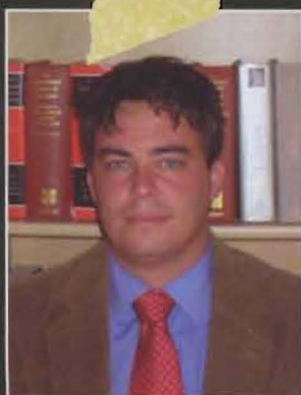
I prefer water. I'm addicted to morning coffee (have been since 1976).
If you are asking about alcohol -- beer, preferably a rich and flavorful one.

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?

About age 12 -- a counseling psychologist. I don't remember wanting to be anything before that.

Can you tell a difference between a freshman and a senior? How?

Certainly! It's difficult to tell if a person is 18 or 22 when they're alone, but in the same room, 22 looks older than 18. Seniors are more cynical. Seniors are very pragmatic in that they want to know what they need to do to successfully complete your course. Seniors are more confident than freshman. When freshmen try to appear confident, it comes off as cocky, not confident.



DR. KYLE HARPER

Assistant Professor of Classics and Letters

Classes:
Greek and Roman Civilization
The Origins of Christianity
Law and Justice

OU Employee for: 3 years

Has been here for 3 years because: I am a native Oklahoman. I was an undergraduate at OU, and I was lucky enough to be able to come back and teach here.

Education from:
B.A. - OU
M.A., Ph.D. - Harvard

What was your first day of class as a teacher like and how have your first days changed since then?

I was pretty nervous but I think I hid it well. I'll never forget on the first day, as I started talking, I noticed a kid texting with his phone in his lap. I stopped the lecture and asked him, are you texting? He turned beet red, and everybody got a laugh, but it broke the ice. I have definitely become more confident. I love teaching at OU. I still hate texting in class.

What drew you to the Letters and Classics field?

I knew I wanted to be a professor because I love to write and I love to teach. The ancient world fascinated me. The legacy of the ancient world is all around us, in law, in religion, in literature.

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?
Explain. Communicate. Inspire.

Favorite movie and/or TV show?
Seinfeld

Favorite book?
The Sun Also Rises

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?
Lately I've gotten into distance running. It's relaxing.

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?
A truck driver or an archaeologist.

When people find out you're a professor, what is their first response?
Jealousy. I have the best job in the world.

What projects are you working on now, and intend to work on in the future?
I'm working on a book about the changes made by Christianity, and then I'm going to do one on the early history of human rights.

Favorite spot on campus?
Either the spoonholder, where I proposed to my wife, or my seats in the football stadium, where I've literally sat my entire life.



MEL ODOM

Adjunct Professor

Classes:
Intro to Professional Writing
Writing the Short Story
Writing the Novel
Independent Study

How long have you worked at OU? Four years.

What brought you here?
Assistant Dean John Hockett asked if I'd be willing to teach Short Story. I have to admit, I was nervous, but I make a habit of doing anything that I've never done or am afraid of doing.

Education from?
I graduated with a double major in English and history from East Central University, but I consider my education to be ongoing.

How do you keep students from falling asleep?
A cattle prod. Generally, I try to keep the class interactive.

What do you do if a student does fall asleep?
I duck tape them and toss them out in the hall. Usually it takes one instance of this before they get a clue.

What was your first day of class as a teacher like and how has your first day changed since then?
On my first day of class, I was terrified. Fortunately, I got through it and connected with that group of students quickly. Fear soon turned to pure enjoyment, and a lot of work.

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?
Energetic. Supportive. Shocking!

If you could tell your 20-year-old self something that you've learned since then, what would it be?
Actually, I've got a list. I think I'd tell my younger self to relax and take it one day at a time.

Favorite movie?
Kuffs with Christian Slater. I love that movie. I laugh every time I see it.

Favorite book?
Robert B. Parker's *Early Autumn*. It's about fathers and sons, and it taught me a lot.

Favorite saying to live by or your favorite quote?
"If you're not standing on the edge, you're taking up too much room."

Drink of choice?
Diet Dr. Pepper

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?
A superhero. Still waiting on my mutant powers to kick in. After that, a writer. Always and forever.

How many books have you published?
Over 150.



DR. STEWART RYAN

Associate Professor of Physics
& Astronomy

Classes:
Physics for Non-Majors
Intro. to Engineering Seminar
Independent Study

How long have you worked here? 32+ years

What brought you here?

I had two job offers at the time: one from OU and the other from Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. I decided to come to see if I liked teaching.

Where are you from?

I was born in upstate New York and have lived in Indiana, Michigan, Connecticut, Arizona and (obviously) Oklahoma.

Where did you obtain your education?

B.S. in physics from University of Notre Dame, Ph.D. in physics from the University of Michigan, and a postdoctoral position at Yale.

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?

Fast-paced, brilliant, entertaining. My students would probably say, too fast-paced, not illuminating, boring.

How do you keep students from falling asleep?

Blow things up in class.

What is your favorite movie?

*M*A*S*H*. I first saw as a "sneak" preview before it was released.

Favorite book?

Kon-Tiki by Thor Heyerdahl (a true story about crossing the Pacific on a raft). I got it for Christmas when I was ten and I re-read it three years ago and loved it just as much.

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?

I'm not a good carpenter; but I love to make "sawdust" in the garage. I also dig for my family roots and learned to enjoy history!

What is your favorite saying to live by or your favorite quote?

Illegitimi non carborundum

Drink of choice?

An iced infusion of *Camellia sinensis*

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?

At age six I wanted to be a fireman or policeman 'cause I was tough!

Favorite spot on campus?

There are two: sitting on a campus park bench on a sunny day and browsing the stacks in the library.

How do you feel about your nickname -- Dr. Indestructo, correct?

My alter ego is: The incredible, the amazing Dr. Indestructo, who astounds, astonishes and amuses all ages with dazzling, delightfully dangerous deeds and death-defying demonstrations of fun-filled facets of physical phenomena! [Talk about hype!]



DR. WAYNE B. THOMAS

John T. Steed Chair &
Professor of Accounting

Classes:
Introductory Financial Accounting

How long have you worked here? Since 2000

What brought you here?

I grew up in OKC. My first position was at the University of Utah. Once OU had a position available in my area, I looked for the opportunity to move back.

Where did you obtain your education?

Bachelor's - Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Master's and Ph.D. - Oklahoma State University

How would you describe your teaching style in three (or fewer) words?
Connect with students.

What do you do for fun? Hobbies?

Basketball, golf, tennis, crosswords, but I spend by far most of my hobby time coaching little league sports.

What is your favorite saying to live by or your favorite quote?

When you near the end of your life and look back, you should be able to say that you never cheated or hurt anyone but made a positive difference.

Drink of choice?

Pepsi

If you were any super hero, who would you be?

Superman

When you were a little kid, what did you want to be?

NBA star.

Favorite book? Why?

Bible. Teaches us to serve one another.

Favorite movie? Why?

Gladiator -- honorable actions of the main character; *Groundhog Day* -- one man goes from being obsessed with himself to serving others; *The Notebook* -- makes me think about how much I care for my wife and want to always be there for her.

Favorite spot on campus?

Student Union - it's nice to see everyone coming together.

Have you always been good at math?

I often joke that when I was in high school, I'd be sad when I finished the last math homework problem.

If you have anything else to add, please do so here:

In all sincerity, I feel lucky to be a professor at the University of Oklahoma. This is my dream job.