

Summer 2023

Live Life
Better

The Sport and Wellness Issue

From athletic performance to product design, UO people, programs, and expertise light paths to health and well-being.
Volume 102 Number 4. Illustration by David Gill.

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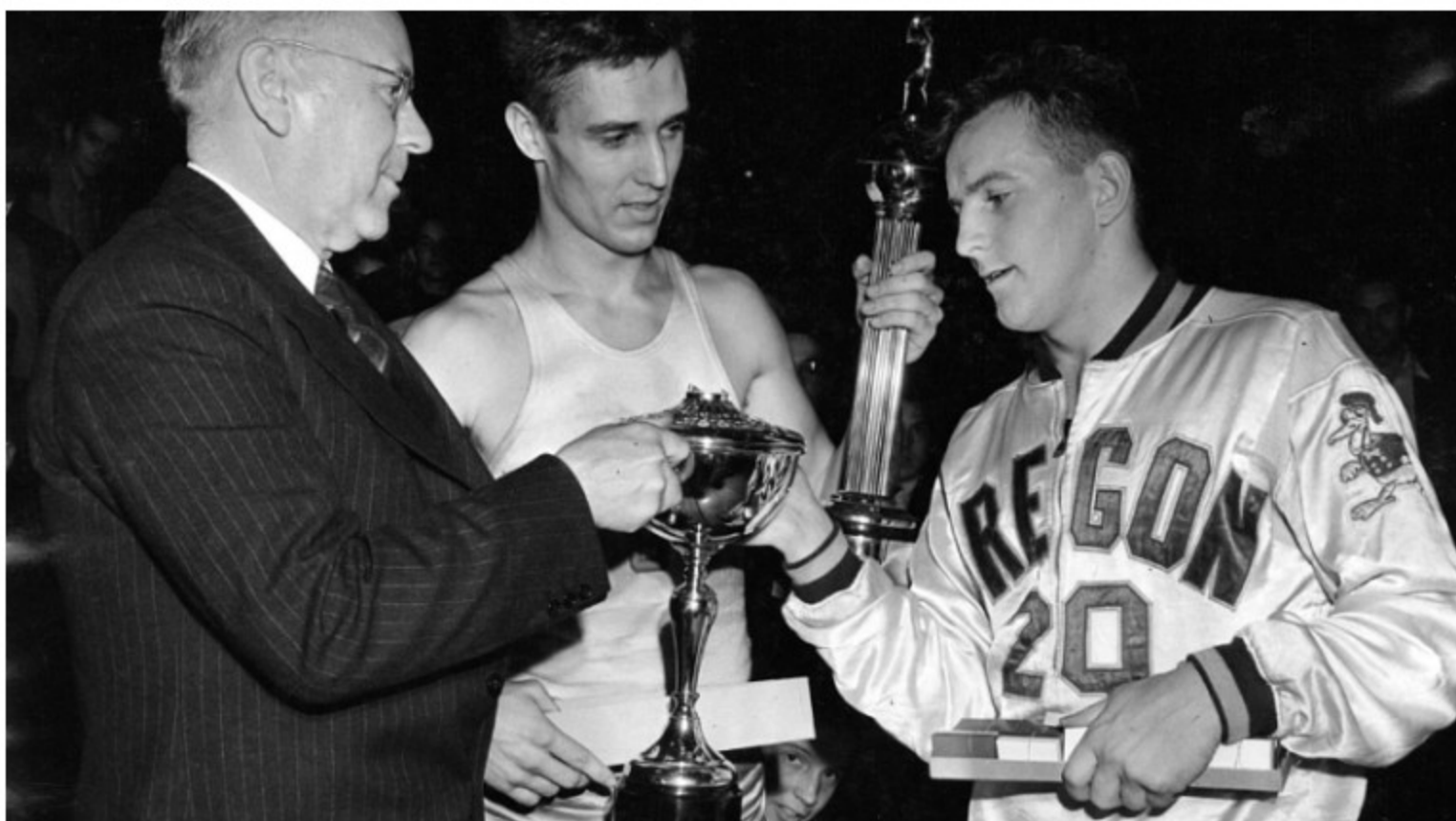
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UO Advances Health through Sport and Wellness Initiative

Illustration by David Gill • July 12, 2023

The University of Oregon has a strong commitment to academic excellence, a worldwide reputation in athletics, and exceptional research and athletic facilities. In the UO’s emerging [Sport and Wellness Initiative](#), students, faculty, and partners interact, learn, research, and work together to make the most of those assets, propelling the university to international leadership in the fields of health and human performance.



This issue of *Oregon Quarterly* explores UO-based experiences and educational opportunities under the initiative—drawing from human physiology, prevention science, community well-being, data analytics, product design, athletics, sports industry expertise and more—that aim to help people live longer, healthier, and more enjoyable lives.

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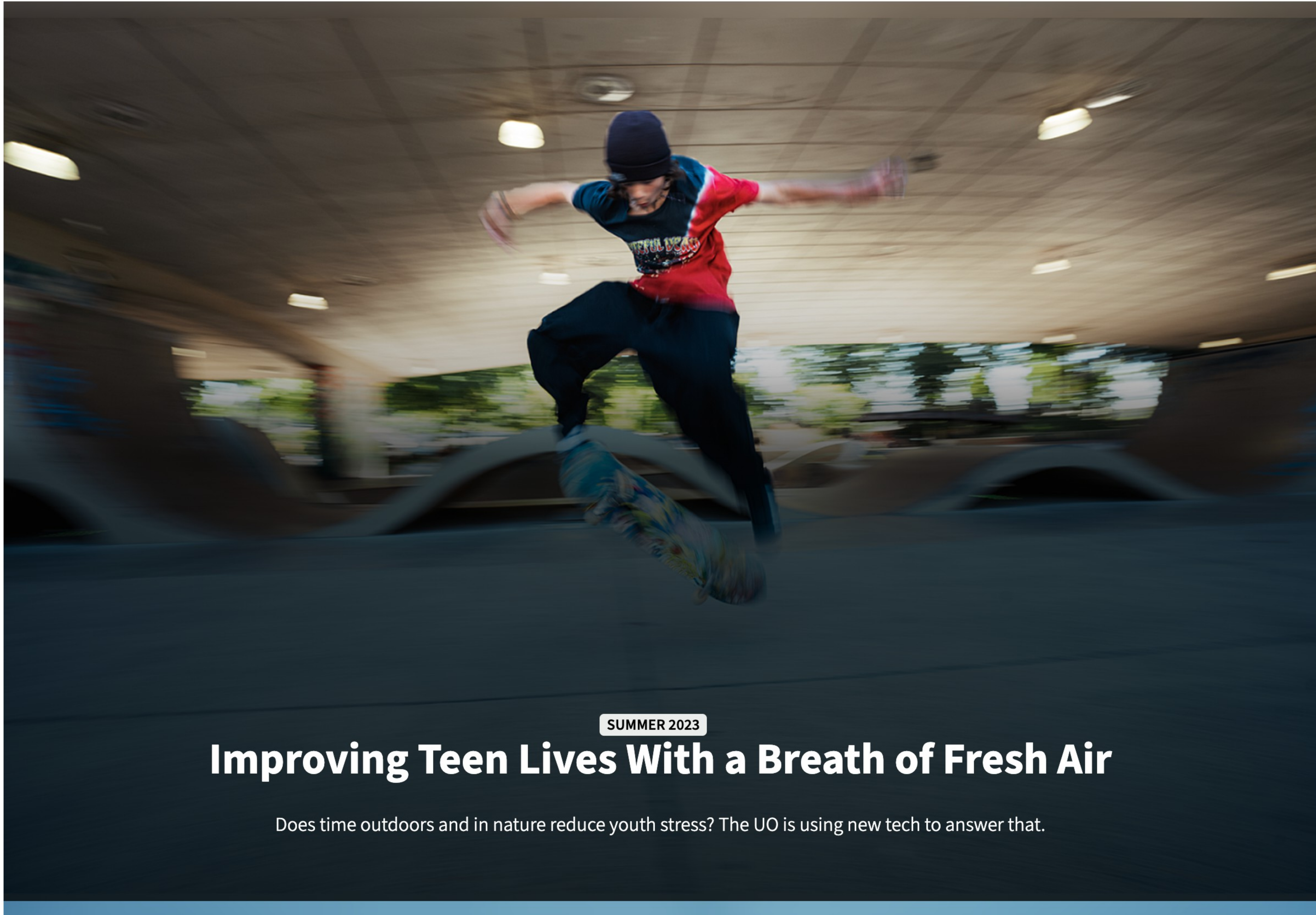
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By Alice Callahan · Photos by Nic Walcott · July 12, 2023

8 min read



On a breezy June evening, a 13-year-old named Ashton pauses outside Tactics board shop in downtown Eugene. He proudly carries a brand-new skateboard, and as the sharp whistle of a passing train cuts through town, reflects on what skating means to him.

Skating is about spending time with friends and being active, he says. And it means getting outdoors, usually in one of Eugene’s leafy parks, which helps clear his mind.

“With every day I spend inside, I get a little bit more stressed, for sure,” Ashton says. “But when you go outside, it just all goes away.”

At the University of Oregon, researchers are studying the everyday experiences of teens such as Ashton, trying to understand how time outdoors and in nature affect their stress levels, health, and behavior.

Using cutting-edge technology from a UO spinoff, researchers are tracking a week in the life of hundreds of Eugene-area adolescents, including physical activity, stress levels, sleep, body image, and time on phones. All of that, plus the quantity and quality of their time in nature.

The study is led by Evergreen Associate Professor [Liz Budd](#) and Evergreen Associate Professor [Nichole Kelly](#) of the College of Education and will be the first of its kind to collect objective and individualized data on adolescents’ time in nature.

“I feel like I don’t have a lot of opportunities, and that’s probably contributing to my stress levels.”

The granularity of the data is possible because of a new app called [NatureDose](#), which measures a person’s time outdoors and in nature based on elements such as tree canopy, bodies of water, and levels of air and noise pollution. The app was developed by NatureQuant, a company cofounded by the College of Arts and Sciences’ [Chris Minson](#), Kenneth and Kenda Singer Professor in Human Physiology.

Research has shown that spending time in nature is associated with greater physical activity and sleep, reduced stress, improved mental health, better cognitive function, lower blood pressure, and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. But those studies generally relied on crude measures or self-reporting by participants; none have collected data as detailed and individualized as that generated by the NatureDose app.

Plus, few studies have looked at time in nature during adolescence, which is a uniquely vulnerable stage, Budd says. As kids become teenagers, their physical activity and sleep often decrease, and rates of anxiety, depression, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders increase. And today’s teens are coming of age in an era marked by a pandemic, worries about social media and screentime, gun violence, climate change, and a national [youth mental health crisis](#). It’s a stressful time to be a teenager, Budd says—but maybe time in nature can help.



To learn more about the study, scan the QR code or email buddteam.uoresearch@gmail.com

Tech to track teens outside

Once downloaded onto a smartphone, the NatureDose app tracks where the user spends time as they go about their day, including differentiating time indoors and outdoors and calculating a “NatureDose” for minutes of nature exposure. The app offers motivation to log more time in nature and reap its health benefits (like aiming for ten thousand steps per day, but instead focused on minutes in nature), and it’s a powerful tool for researchers, Minson says.

In the teen study, participants were asked to go about their week as usual, allowing the app to capture their typical time spent outdoors and estimate the nature quality of their locations on a scale of 1 to 100 (called the “NatureScore”).

For example, when Ashton was hanging with friends outside his middle school next to expansive Westmoreland Park, he earned a NatureScore of 76. At his favorite skate park, located under the I-105 on-ramp and framed by a mix of greenspace, asphalt, and traffic noise, he logged a score of 52. A hike up Spencer Butte, on the other hand, would give him a 99.

Participants are also outfitted with an accelerometer, which is worn like a wristwatch and measures physical activity and sleep patterns. At the end of the week, data downloaded from the device reveals when participants went to sleep each night (4:00 a.m. for at least one participant, who said he stayed up playing video games), how many times they woke each night, and the amount of time spent being sedentary or active at different intensity levels.

With support from the [Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation](#) and the [Sport and Wellness Initiative](#), researchers are collecting data on roughly 350 adolescents. Kidsports, a nonprofit youth organization run by Beverly Smith, BS ’88 (physical education), provides a safe and welcoming site for study visits at their Civic Park facility and has helped recruit a diverse group of teen participants from Eugene, Springfield, and nearby towns including Cottage Grove.



Accelerometers capture sleep patterns and time spent being sedentary or active

At the start, participants complete a survey covering information including demographics, mental health, attitudes about physical activity, connectedness to nature, mindfulness, body image, self-esteem, and social media use. During the study week, they’re prompted by text message to complete a nightly survey about whether they experienced stress or discrimination and their feelings about their body that day, plus how much time they spent on phones and on social media.



Rubie’s use of the NatureDose app prompted a desire to get outside more

“It was a little surprising to be seeing how much I was on my phone,” says Rubie, 15. But she was also pleased to see how much time she logged outside in the NatureDose app, and she’ll keep using it as a reminder to go outdoors, which “helps a lot with my mental health and stress,” she says. “It just kind of makes me feel like I’m not as trapped or having to do a lot of things.”

Grad students take the lead

Swing by the Kidsports facility this summer and you may catch Esmeralda Castro and Zach Farley, both doctoral students in [prevention science](#), chatting with teens on the study, which the two are running with the help of other undergraduate and graduate students.

Farley intends to focus his dissertation on spatial analysis of the NatureDose data, including the number and proximity of parks in the neighborhoods of participants. He predicts that teens with parks close to their homes will log more nature exposure and physical activity—and be less stressed—than those who live in neighborhoods without parks.



Graduate student researchers Zach Farley and Mandi Ward ran a research project . . .



. . . that will provide insights on the well-being of Olin and hundreds of other adolescents in the Eugene area

Farley’s hypothesis rang true for one study participant who lives in North Eugene. “I can walk for five minutes, and I hit the expressway, and then I walk in the other direction for ten minutes, and it’s like a really busy road,” says the 17-year-old. “I would love to be able to go outside more and really be in nature, but I feel like I don’t have a lot of opportunities for that, and that’s probably contributing to my stress levels.”

Castro is especially interested in adolescent physical activity and body appreciation. Participants are surveyed regarding how much they respect, feel love for, and “appreciate the different and unique characteristics of [their] body,” she says. Research has found that adolescent girls with greater body appreciation were more physically active. Castro hypothesizes that spending more time in nature will lead to greater body appreciation, which could increase physical activity.

“With increased nature exposure, there’s this sort of cognitive quiet that our mind gets, and it’s a very restorative phase,” Castro says. “It helps us recover from negative images, negative thoughts, negative perceptions—which include thinking negatively of our bodies and of our capabilities—and helps restore these positive thoughts.” She’s also examining the role of gender in body image and physical activity; teen boys, on average, are more physically active and have greater body appreciation than teen girls.

Exploring the data

Results from the study—expected in early 2024—could support recommendations by pediatricians and other health experts that adolescents spend more time in nature to improve well-being, Budd says. And teens may be more motivated to get outdoors and be physically active if there are proven benefits like improved sleep and mental health, Castro adds. Findings could also inform the design of healthier communities that incorporate more parks and courtyards or other outdoor spaces for schools, Farley says.

The researchers plan to examine how disabilities, weight bias, and other forms of discrimination affect adolescents’ time in nature, and they’ll dig into the data on how teens are using screens and social media.

While their teens got set up for the study, several parents said they’re worried about how screen time and social media are affecting their kids, echoing an advisory on social media’s “risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents,” issued in May by US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy.

The ubiquity of screens in kids’ lives “feels like a big experiment that we didn’t sign up for,” says one mother. She encouraged her teen to enroll in the UO study, in part to contribute to research so that scientists can better understand the very thing she worries about.

For his part, Ashton has a nuanced view of social media. Snapchat is useful for texting friends about meeting up to skate, he says, and he likes the encouragement he receives when he posts videos of his skate tricks on Instagram.

“People will be like, ‘Dude, that was sick!’” he says. “And it feels good.”



Ashton keeps stress under control with time outside (photo: Chris Larsen, University Communications)

Alice Callahan is a freelance writer in Eugene whose work appears in publications including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Knowable Magazine*.

Nic Walcott, BS ’16 (journalism), is a videographer and photographer for University Communications.

EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLNESS

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EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLNESS

UO Scientists and Big Ten Peers Make Powerful Partners

Teammates in research, they’re advancing work in education, health, and child development



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How to Care for Someone with Swallowing Problems

Samantha Shune, an expert on aging, troubleshoots this problem of dementia



EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELLNESS

How to Empower Yourself to Survive and Thrive

Former UO instructor authors book on self-defense and success in a sexist world

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Class instructor Nate Roese leads Ace around the barn

Taking the Reins, Budding Designers Gain Industry Experience

When product design students saw the benefits of equine therapy, they went back to the studio to let their creativity run wild

By Ed Dorsch • Photos courtesy Nate Roese • July 12, 2023

7 min read



Enzo was a shy horse. So shy, recalls Liam Howard, he hid behind a tree while Howard and fourteen other University of Oregon undergraduates toured Healing Reins Equine Assisted Services, a therapeutic horse-riding center near Bend.

On a wintry day in January, the seniors in the [College of Design](#)’s product design program traveled to the twenty-acre Central Oregon facility where horse-centered therapy is offered to some two hundred clients each week.

Their mission as students in Adaptive Athletes Equine Hippotherapy: create gear to make the work of Healing Reins easier and more effective.

In other words, practice being a product designer.

Healing Reins offers horse-centered therapy for all ages and abilities, developing individualized treatment plans that include horse grooming, trail riding, exercises, and games. Through their adaptive horse-riding program, they help clients with physical, emotional, cognitive, and developmental challenges.

The organization also provides adolescents and young adults in residential treatment programs with equine-assisted learning that promotes life skills such as trust, respect, honesty, and communication. Through hippotherapy, they apply the movement of horses as a treatment tool for physical, occupational, and speech and language therapy.



As part of their Adaptive Athletes Equine Hippotherapy course, product design majors toured Healing Reins, a twenty-acre Central Oregon facility offering horse-centered therapy

During their visit to Bend, most students focused on the Healing Reins staff and clients. But Howard was immediately enthralled with the horses—their beauty, size, and distinct personalities (like Enzo’s).

“Seeing what the horses do and how they move struck me,” Howard recalls. “That field experience gave me a great impression of what we’re trying to do.”

Horses are incredibly sensitive to physical and visual stimuli. At the withers (the highest part between the shoulder blades), a horse can sense a shift in pressure equal to the weight of three grains of sand. From two yards away, they can tell if you tilt your head just eight thousandths of an inch.

This keen awareness makes therapy riding taxing for horses. They must constantly correct their balance to accommodate untrained riders, many with disabilities, who don’t use standard physical and visual cues.

These hardworking horses were Howard’s muses for an innovative product: the Bronco Prong.

The Bronco Prong is made of high-impact polystyrene and resembles a molecular model you might find in a chemistry class. It has four black spheres (a large pair and a small pair) at either end of a red handle. The large spheres are used to massage the horse’s spine and the small pair is for smaller muscle groups such as those near the ankles. It’s simple, elegant, and remarkably effective.

If the horses can recover more quickly and thoroughly, Howard says, Healing Reins can help more people. He also hopes it will help therapy horses live longer.

Learning product design by designing helpful products

Undergraduates earning a [product design bachelor of fine arts](#) start in Eugene, then spend their final year at the University of Oregon Portland campus, where they’re encouraged to find industry internships.



UO senior Ian McMurray tried out equipment used to test saddles

Before traveling to Bend, the students conducted research, sketched out rough ideas, and participated in Zoom discussions with Healing Reins. After the trip, they refined their ideas and spent hours in the [UO Portland studios](#) using professional design software, industrial sewing machines, and 3D printers to create and refine prototypes.

Each student’s ten-week journey from concept to creation was as unique as their product. But they all developed a custom work plan and communicated regularly with Healing Reins.

The class culminated in a final review session with visiting UO professors from Eugene and Portland, as well as reviewers from Nike. Students were critiqued on their storytelling, construction quality, innovation, and problem solving. Healing Reins joined via Zoom.

Howard’s invention worked so well Healing Reins kept his prototypes and immediately put them to use. He’s considering patenting the Bronco Prong and selling it to therapy horse owners, a potential market he hadn’t thought

about much before taking the class.

Exposing students to a new target audience was intentional, says class instructor Nate Roese, MS ’20 (sports product design). Roese is a product developer at Evergreen Prosthetics and Orthotics in Beaverton.

“I work in this industry, so I’m around people with missing limbs and certain disabilities all the time,” Roese says. “It’s exciting to go back and inspire budding designers to think about these people. Product designers don’t always have to work on the coolest basketball shoes. There are so many possibilities for creating something that’s both awesome and helpful.”

Portland is a hub for the sports product industry. Roese—a Big Ten athlete who qualified for the 2023 USA Indoor Track and Field Championships in the 800-meter race—wanted students to consider a customer base that he hopes the industry will recognize more often: adaptive athletes who compete in sports that are modified to allow people with disabilities to participate.

He adds that novel solutions for niche markets often lead to design innovations that can be applied to everyday products. Other exciting aspects of the class, Roese says, are the upward spirals of evaluation and iteration that inspire students to improve working prototypes based on trial and error.

“The students aren’t just hearing from us,” Roesse says. “They’re working directly with participants, getting real-time feedback, sending prototypes, then getting more feedback and making adjustments. They finish this class with an impressive product sample for their portfolio—and a compelling design story to share with prospective employers.”

A rider’s vest that is flexible, breathable, and field-tested

For undergraduate Olivia Banks, her most poignant memory was trying out the hoist used for clients unable to mount a horse without assistance.

“It was different to experience it, as opposed to just watching it,” Banks says. “The hoist pinched me. It was uncomfortable.”

Experiencing this in person, she says, is different than reading about it or seeing a video. It made her feel like she was part of the process—something you can’t get through a textbook.

“Product design requires the ability to understand what peoples’ needs are without them having to directly express it to us,” Banks says. “And then you put those into product-oriented solutions. Also, I want the objects I bring into the world to bring joy to people.”

Banks designed her Equest Vest to replace the uncomfortable gait belts that clients wear while riding horses. A gait belt is a thin strap that fits around a rider’s waist, providing handles for volunteers to keep the rider centered. Standard gait belts cut into riders’ stomachs and limit their movement. And the grips are not comfortable for volunteers to hold.

After the trip to Bend, Banks researched thermal-sensitivity maps of the human body to see where heat collects and ventilation would be needed for her more comfortable, functional vest version of a gait belt. She scoured Portland to find materials with the right stretch.

To make sure the Equest Vest was the best it can be, she conducted extra testing beyond what the class required, trying it out with riders and therapy horses near her hometown of Beaverton.

“The Equest Vest makes sense once you see it in action,” Banks says. “It definitely took a lot of research to figure out the sweet spot for the design.”

Transforming ideas into products that can be tested is one of the most exciting aspects of the course, says instructor [James Tuttle](#), BFA ’17 (industrial and product design). Tuttle manages the UO Innovation Lab in Portland, which serves the [Graduate Program in Sports Product Design](#).

Though this is the first year the studio course has focused on adaptive horse riding, the students always develop a product that they test and refine—getting as close to perfection as possible using available time, tools, and materials. The best part about this year, Tuttle says, was that students worked directly with the end users, trying to stand in their shoes and understand what they have to manage every day.

“We invited students to put away their biases and preconceived notions, to simply try to understand what someone’s going through and how they could help. When we arrived at Healing Reins, they immediately began taking photos and jotting down notes. You could feel the magic happening and everyone getting excited about design,” Tuttle says.

“They had to understand the world of their intended users and help them overcome the challenges they face. Ultimately, the students created products that will enable the end users to perform better—or just have a better overall experience.”



Ethan Doss in a hoist used to help clients on and off horses

Ed Dorsch, BA ’94 (English, sociology), MA ’99 (journalism), is a staff writer for University Communications.

ART, DESIGN & LITERATURE

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Composer Reimagines a Classic for Bach Fest Project



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Playing and Paying Forward the Art and Traditions of Jazz



ART, DESIGN & LITERATURE

Literary Sisters: Two Years That Changed Our Culture

Damien Geter is known for infusing his works with musical styles of the Black diaspora

Video: Pianist Keith Brown fuels the dreams of students in UO's thriving jazz studies program

English professor’s new book captures pivotal moment for Black feminist writing

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SUMMER 2023

Team Captures Motion to Unleash Performance

Athletics and academics team up to explore performance and advance sports science

By Ed Dorsch • Video by Tusu Mahmud • Illustration by David Gill • July 12, 2023

5 min read



The grandstands of PK Park are empty, but the sound of bats hitting baseballs rings out over the spring breeze.

Jaime Santos, a University of Oregon human physiology major, is working hard. While he doesn't play for Oregon, he could be one of the team's most valuable Ducks.

As part of his sports science internship with the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Human Physiology, the senior leads a team of students setting up eight small cameras on big tripods. They're connected to ethernet cables that sprawl across the turf and converge in a box connected to a gaming computer.

The new Theia3D Markerless Motion Capture system, funded by Athletics and the Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance at Oregon, may be unremarkable in appearance. But it's state of the art. Using multiple cameras and artificial intelligence, the system generates biomechanical data in three dimensions to measure the movement of student-athletes.

For a student, using the latest technology to study athletes is a great opportunity. For the university, it's symbolic of a bold strategy uniting athletics, research, technology, data, and human performance.



Jaime Santos sets up one of the motion capture cameras (photo: Tusu Mahmud)

The science of sport

The university has identified [sport and wellness research](#) as a strength with great potential for cross-campus collaboration. This effort includes scientific studies that will improve lives—not just for athletes, but all of us.

It also includes the [Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance at Oregon](#), a \$220 million research initiative in its third year. The alliance is providing resources and connecting scientists and institutions to create a collaborative research network. The global initiative launched in 2021 with a gift from the Joe and Clara Tsai Foundation.

A founding partner, the UO is one of six institutions in this effort to study peak physical performance to help everyone lead healthier, more active lives. The alliance is based in the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact.

“Our goal is to give coaches and athletes better information to make better decisions,” says Jordan Troester, director of performance and sports science for Athletics. In collaboration with academics, Troester oversees twenty to thirty interns including Santos as part of his work with all the UO teams.

Troester is also a principal investigator with the alliance. His offices and research facilities are within the Marcus Mariota Sports Performance Center, the UO student-athlete wellness, sports science, and training center that opened in 2016.

As a tight end at the College of William and Mary, Troester was drawn to one aspect of the football experience that most of his teammates disdained: physical training.

After a bachelor’s degree in kinesiology, Troester earned his PhD in sports science from the University of Technology Sydney. Before coming to the UO, he served as a performance coach for Australian rugby teams and the Vegas Golden Knights, of the National Hockey League.

Moving pictures

Since October 2022, when he first unboxed the components of the UO’s new motion-capture system, Santos has been getting it up and running for Troester. It uses artificial intelligence to combine high-resolution images from synchronized cameras capturing 240 frames per second and generate moving, three-dimensional images of athletes.

On screen, these digital exoskeletons throw balls, jump, swing bats, pitch—anything the athlete does in the camera’s eye. The system spits out volumes of biomechanical data about torque, force, three-dimensional joint angles, and velocity. For example, in addition to the changing angles of a pitcher’s elbow, it can determine the speed of the ball the moment it leaves their hand.

Most motion capture systems require the subjects being filmed to wear special suits with reflective markers. Markerless systems record athletes wearing standard gear, which means they can move naturally. It also means zero setup time for players—important during games and practices.



After the initial testing is complete, Troester will use the system to study pitching and batting for softball and baseball, then capture baseline data from every UO student-athlete and use it for research on various sports.

The end game: improve performance and reduce injuries.

“It gives us a lot,” says Santos. “The software outputs metrics for every joint in the body. We’re working with the coaching staff to break it down to two to five relevant points.”

From far behind to the forefront

Santos came to Eugene from the San Francisco Bay Area because of the [human physiology program](#). In high school, he was captain of his track-and-field, cross-country, and soccer teams. He graduated in June and is now an intern studying the effects of exercise on cancer patients at Oregon Health & Science University’s Knight Cancer Institute in Portland.

Opportunities for students like him to participate in research will help them start careers in sports science, a field where the US lags behind, says Troester. Through internships, research opportunities, and collaborations with academics, Troester and his colleagues hope to establish the UO as a leader in this arena.



Jordan Troester

Troester is a scientist, but he’s also a liaison, diplomat, and translator. Working closely with coaches and trainers, he identifies problems that need to be solved and presents solutions based on scientific evidence—in practical ways that dovetail with rigorous practice and competition schedules.

In Australia, Troester says, nearly every professional team has a relationship with a university. Pro teams fund graduate fellowships and it’s not uncommon to have more than one PhD candidate on staff. They work full time for the team, but have their own specific research focus and access to university resources.

“There’s plenty of great research in exercise physiology and biomechanics in the US,” Troester says. “But applied sports science programs that offer the knowledge and skills to work in team sports? They just don’t exist here.”

Because of this, many sports scientists hired by professional teams and universities in the US are trained in Australia or Europe.

“We’ve identified an opportunity for the University of Oregon, given its academic capacities, brand, and athletic department,” says Troester. “We want to put those pieces together and build a revolutionary academic and professional development model.”

Data scientists are like another player on the team



Duck QB Bo Nix feeds data while flinging footballs

Faculty members in data science are helping athletics tap into the power of all this data, Troester says. For example, in a Wu Tsai Alliance project studying hamstring injury risks, Troester is collaborating with Jake Searcy, research assistant professor of [data science](#) in the College of Arts and Sciences. This study collects data from UO football players wearing small sensors in their shoulder pads or in vests during games.

These wearables connect to satellites (or, if they’re indoors, to positional radio frequency beacons). Instantaneous position readings provide information about velocity, distance run, and acceleration.

Compared to markerless motion capture, it’s old school. Researchers are moving away from wearables toward cameras and artificial intelligence. Portable, mobile, and automated, the new tech works anywhere and requires no special gear for players. It also generates even more information per second.

Accumulating more data at faster speeds is great, Troester says. But storing and analyzing it presents new challenges.

“It’s an incredible opportunity for a data scientist,” Searcy adds. “Every day we are getting new and richer data. It’s up to us to make sure that data leads to better outcomes for athletes, and that’s going to take new algorithms, tools, and most importantly a cross-disciplinary team working together.”

Troester is quick to add that the latest technology doesn’t mean much without a clearly defined problem to solve and questions to answer. Regardless of how powerful the tools are (and the volumes of data they gather), the research must be useful to coaches, trainers, and athletes—and, ultimately, anyone who wants to stay healthy and active.

“Think of your mechanic buddy who loves to open the hood and figure out what’s causing that knocking sound in your car. We’re like that, but with the human body.”

—Mike Hahn

Uniting academics and athletics

Troester says collaborating with faculty helps him break outside of the box.

“In athletics, we have a lot going on. It’s really easy to get tunnel vision and focus on what you’re doing,” he adds. “Same in academics. They have their research. Across a lot of universities, there are great people working on similar projects but not crossing over.”

What’s the secret sauce at the University of Oregon?

“I think it comes down to leadership,” Troester says. “Also, collaboration is at the heart of our personal ethos.”



Human physiology professor Mike Hahn agrees. Hahn is the director of the UO [Bowerman Sports Science Center](#) and associate director of the Wu Tsai Alliance at Oregon.

Academic researchers think big thoughts—and they should, says Hahn. But the people who work directly with athletes and coaches, like Troester, ask the best questions.

He points to a recent study of stress fractures led by the UO and including the University of Southern California, University of Colorado Boulder, and Stanford University. It was a discussion between Hahn and running coaches that spurred this project.

“I and my students can dream up lots of research questions that are intriguing, but not always practical,” Hahn says. “But the practitioners working directly with the athletes consistently come up with interesting research questions to stimulate the academic discussion.”

Other research efforts funded by the Wu Tsai initiative include a study of ACL injury risks and fatigue in soccer players. Using cameras, force plates, and athletics’ turf facility, Hahn’s team is exploring how shoes with different cleat shapes could help.



Mike Hahn

“People like me get up every day excited to solve problems,” Hahn says. “Think of your mechanic buddy who loves to open the hood and figure out what’s causing that knocking sound in your car. We’re like that, but with the human body.”

Sports scientists who embrace this pragmatic, problem-solving approach—who can gather information and analyze it in useful ways—are in high demand, he adds.

“The UO is a shining example of how athletics and academics can, and should, work together,” Hahn says. “I think this will continue well into the future.”

- Ed Dorsch** BA '94 (English, sociology), MA '99 (journalism), is a staff writer for University Communications.
- Tusu Mahmud** Class of '25, is an architecture major and student worker for University Communications.

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SUMMER 2023

Fighting Hunger from the Willamette Valley

Professor Michael Fakhri is the food law expert for the United Nations—and an avid backyard gardener

By Matt Cooper • Illustration by David Gill • July 12, 2023

3 min read



Nearly a third of the world doesn’t have enough food. Hunger is rising in every country, from the US to Uganda. Yet despite this demand, there is an imbalance in supply: small farms are mostly toiling in poverty while global agribusinesses enjoy historic profits.

This is the state of an international food crisis, according to Michael Fakhri, a professor in the University of Oregon [School of Law](#). Fortunately, he’s perfectly positioned to do something about it.

[Fakhri](#) is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. In this high-profile volunteer role, he uses his expertise in food law—legislation on the production, trade, and handling of food—to guide policy on issues including farmers’ rights and global food-delivery systems. Working with stakeholders ranging from grass-roots activists to international governments, Fakhri reports on topics that push the UN’s agenda.

High on Fakhri’s agenda is the food crisis, which he says is rooted in laws contrary to the position that healthy, affordable, accessible food is a human right. He’s working on a report regarding what the UN should do about it.

“One of the major problems is that the power is in the hands of the few large corporate food systems and their focus is on input and output,” Fakhri says. “We need to put the power back in the hands of the people. It’s about people having the control over deciding what counts as good food, how we eat, and what food relationships we’re going to have with nature and with other people.”

Seeds = life

If Fakhri could right one food wrong immediately, he would ensure that seeds remain free to use and share.

Seeds are, by definition, the source of life itself, he says. Farmers have saved and exchanged them for thousands of years, ensuring biodiversity and better disease resistance.

But companies are increasingly patenting seeds and using property law to block access to them. The concurrent rise of single-crop farming weakens soils and increases the risk of disease and pest outbreaks, Fakhri says.

Michael, how does your garden grow?

Summer is Fakhri’s favorite season—it means backyard barbecues and trips to the farmers market. With the warming weather, Fakhri’s garden is starting to come alive with strawberries, tomatoes, and more. The only question? His cucumbers.

“I have a complicated relationship with cucumbers,” he says, laughing. “I don’t know why, they don’t grow well in my garden. Last year, I finally got it. I’m praying I get good cucumbers.”

Hunger amid agricultural abundance

Fakhri is coleader of the [UO Food Resiliency Project](#), which examines environmental and policy issues of the food system, including production, transportation, and consumption.

His 2010 arrival in the Willamette Valley impressed upon him the problems with the local food system: more than one million acres of the basin are devoted to agriculture yet there is hunger in the community and even on campus, he says.

Fakhri will study this predicament and also plans to build relationships with the Kalapuya people and other tribes and bands of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the first peoples of the valley and other parts of Oregon.

“I’m just really grateful to live here, even though I’m an uninvited guest on indigenous land,” Fakhri says. “I need to be in good relations with the people of this land.”

Matt Cooper is managing editor for *Oregon Quarterly*.

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Cam Burks, BS '96, put himself in harm’s way as a special agent for the US and global dignitaries



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Anita Hill sees Peril and Promise for Feminism

Anita Hill visits May 9 to lecture in conjunction with fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Center for the Study of Women in Society



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The Center for the Study of Women in Society supports inspiring faculty members. But who inspires them?

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SUMMER 2023

Schools are Key to Health Promotion

Through faculty and programs, the College of Education improves not just children’s education, but their well-being

By Laura Lee McIntyre • Photo by Chris Larsen • July 12, 2023

3 min read



Children spend many of their waking hours in school, and teachers are important in shaping their long-term outcomes.

Although we often think of public schools as places for teaching and learning in subjects such as reading and math, they can also be important in improving the health and well-being of students.

A [research review](#) from the University of Oregon College of Education’s [HEDCO Institute for Evidence-Based Educational Practice](#) suggests that schools are key in tackling youth depression with prevention and intervention programs.

[Emily Tanner-Smith](#), HEDCO Institute director and Thomson Professor, and her faculty team review the literature in a rapid and systematic way to produce practical information that school leaders can use to inform their decisions.

The HEDCO Institute has also examined [culturally specific depression prevention](#) programs to better understand the gaps in research. The work of the HEDCO Institute helps identify the evidence for prevention and intervention practices and guides school personnel in making decisions to address student health and well-being.

[Prevention Science](#) faculty members are national and international leaders in understanding factors that promote positive outcomes for youth and risks that are associated with negative outcomes. [Beth Stormshak](#), professor and Philip H. Knight Chair, has spent decades developing the [Family Check-Up](#), a tool that schools can use to support positive parenting, healthy youth behavior (sleep, screen time, physical activity, and family meal times), and positive home-school communication.

With funding from the US Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, Professor Stormshak is investigating the use of the [Family Check-Up Online](#) to promote positive behavioral health outcomes for middle school youth in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This work is timely as youth are experiencing mental health problems at record levels.

As the College of Education, our partnerships with schools and community agencies are critical to the impact of our work. [Jen Doty](#), associate professor in the Department of Counseling Psychology and Human Services, focuses on promoting healthy use of technology through empowering parents to maintain positive relationships with their child, set limits, engage in clear communication, and promote healthy online environments. Professor Doty, although new to Oregon, is already creating a large network of school district partners interested in this work. Through [conversations](#) with parents, youth, and schools, she is tackling issues such as the impact of screen time, social media, and cyberbullying on youth mental and behavioral health.

“I remain committed to the notion that schools serve children —not just children’s education.”

When schools close, we see a real impact on children’s health and well-being. The school closures associated with the pandemic had short-term impacts on children, including loss of learning time, access to supportive adults and peers, and loss of school meals and physical education. Although the short-term impacts are evident, the long-term impacts are yet to be fully understood. My lab, along with UO colleague and research professor [Dave DeGarmo](#), is investigating

the long-term [impact of school closures](#) on youth behavioral well-being. Findings will have implications for practice and policy.

Schools hold promise and possibility for improving the health and well-being of students. Health services such as school nurses, vision and hearing screenings, and mental health intervention are available through many schools. Prioritizing school-based health programs reduces stigma associated with mental health care and barriers to access. In a sense, schools can function as a one-stop shop for communities, particularly rural ones where specialized services are often not available.

Although schools may embrace the idea of educating the “whole child,” this primary-care approach may be in jeopardy as funds are limited and special programs and services are often the first to be cut. Further complicating the issue, highly qualified professionals and specialists are difficult to find.

Yet I remain committed to the notion that schools serve children—not just children’s education—and colleges of education have a responsibility to prepare professionals to serve the myriad needs of children, families, communities, and schools. At the University of Oregon, our educator preparation programs, Prevention Science program, and work with the new [Ballmer Institute for Children’s Behavioral Health](#) make the vision of school-based health promotion attainable.

Laura Lee McIntyre is dean of the College of Education and Castle-McIntosh-Knight Professor of Education.

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By Charles Butler • Illustration by David Gill • July 12, 2023

11 min read



[Editor's note: This article was published prior to the UO's [August 4 decision](#) to join the Big Ten.]

Josh Frankel figured the night would be . . . well, let's just say *uneventful*, at least for him.

Considering Frankel's spot on the Oregon football team—a walk-on, third-string placekicker—uneventful seems like the perfect adjective. You see, on this night, September 25, 1999, he had as much chance of influencing the outcome of the Ducks game against their Pac-10 rival, 16th-ranked USC, as someone working the concession stands. “I mean, as a backup you know you’re always one play away from playing, but as a backup to the backup—and as a kicker—you don’t think that’s going to happen,” Frankel says with a chuckle, his memory tracing back nearly a quarter century. “You’re there really to support your teammates, enjoy the experience, be part of the team, be part of something bigger than you—but not thinking you’re actually going to play a part in the game, especially when your starting kicker’s an All-American.”

At best, Frankel, a senior journalism major, held out hope that he might get on the Autzen Stadium field for a play or two. His dad, Allan, had flown in from Los Angeles for the game. “It was an early-season game,” Frankel says, “and there was a chance I might kick off once.”

For four quarters, all Frankel did was hang out on the Ducks sideline, keeping an eye on the topsy-turvy action on the field, like the 45,660 spectators. He watched as the lead changed hands three times and as penalties piled up (nearly three hundred yards between the two teams), causing the game to run four-plus hours. He witnessed three future NFL quarterbacks play critical roles, even though one of them—Joey Harrington—never tossed a pass or delivered a handoff. He looked up at the scoreboard as regulation time flipped into one overtime . . . and then another . . . and then . . .

And then, with the clock inching toward midnight, the night suddenly became very eventful for Josh Frankel.

Beating the giant

Before we get to that moment, let’s move the time machine forward to an approaching Saturday—November 11—when USC comes to Autzen to play the Ducks in what will likely be the last matchup between the two teams in Eugene for a very long time. S-C says “so long” to the Pac-12 Conference once the coming season wraps up. Along with UCLA, it’s moving to the Big Ten in 2024.

For sure, when it comes to Oregon rivals, USC is no Oregon State and certainly no Washington. But with eleven national championships, the Trojans are the team the Ducks (and others) have long measured their success against. And for the better part of eight decades, from their first meeting in 1915 through the 1993 game, USC ruled the rivalry



Oregon's leading rusher, Reuben Droughns, suffered torn rib cartilage and sat out the second half (photo: Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard)

(32–10–2). “Whenever we played [USC], particularly down in [the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum], it seemed like we had lost before we even got there. We were kind of intimidated,” says Nick Aliotti, 69, the Ducks defensive coordinator from 1999 to 2013. “Typically, if something went wrong early, it became like a big snowball rolling down the hill gathering steam.”

But that pattern flipped in 1994. The Ducks rolled to a 22–7 road victory—and later finished the season with a Rose Bowl bid, their first in thirty-seven years. “That ’94 game was a sort of a turning point,” Aliotti says. “We beat the giant.”

And since then, the record stands: Ducks 12 wins, Giants 7.

“It’s the dream of a small-town guy”

Now, let’s get back to the ’99 game, perhaps the best game ever between the Ducks and Trojans at Autzen. Even those with foggy memories about all the particulars of that night—like Mike Bellotti—realize the impact that game had on a third-string kicker. Bellotti, who was in his fifth season as Ducks coach, needed YouTube to refresh his recall of the game, though some details remain lasting: that his Saturday started at 7 a.m., that his postgame press conference didn’t end until 12:45 a.m. Sunday—and that his third-string kicker played a momentous role. “His life changed that night,” Bellotti, 72, the Ducks’ all-time winningest coach, says of Frankel.

Overcast skies loomed when the game kicked off at 7:25 p.m. Autzen was packed. USC, 2–0, came out in white tops and gold-colored pants, both trimmed in Cardinal red; the Ducks, 2–1 (including an opening-season loss to Michigan State), played in green uniforms and with helmets featuring a logo—the now familiar “O”—that had only recently been adopted. USC was led by a sophomore quarterback, Carson Palmer, who would win the Heisman Trophy three years later. The Ducks had A. J. Feeley calling plays.

Mike Jorgensen, a former Oregon quarterback who was then in his tenth season as the color analyst on Ducks radio broadcasts, remembers feeling a well of pride with Feeley in charge. Both he and Feeley came from Ontario, Oregon, a town of barely eleven thousand people near the Idaho border. “Not a whole lot of small-town guys get the chance to play for Oregon,” says Jorgensen, 60, the Ducks starting quarterback in 1983. “As a small-town kid growing up on the east side of the state and in a completely different time zone, to see one of my homeboys doing the job on USC in Autzen Stadium . . . it’s the dream of a small-town guy. And at the time USC was still the biggest name. People may have hated Oregon State or Washington, but USC was the team to beat.”



A touchdown pass to Herman Ho-Ching put the Ducks up 20–10 in the third quarter (photo: Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard)

The teams were even at halftime, 10–10, but USC went into the third quarter minus Palmer. He had suffered a broken collarbone right before the break on a hit by Oregon safety Michael Fletcher. By the third quarter, the Ducks held what seemed like a comfortable 20–10 lead, built on a Feeley touchdown pass and Nathan Villegas’s second field goal.

Villegas had been a spot-on kicker for the Ducks, once connecting on fourteen consecutive field goals to set a school record. The previous season he was a finalist for the Lou Groza Award, which recognizes the nation’s top collegiate placekicker. And, like many of his teammates, he was a SoCal recruit who enjoyed facing USC. “We were playing against guys we played against in high school,” Villegas, now a sales trainer near Houston, says, “so it was more of a hometown rivalry.”

And the rivalry’s intensity cranked up during a chaotic fourth quarter. Palmer’s replacement, Mike Van Raaphorst, led the Trojans on two 70-plus-yard touchdown drives, the second one putting USC up, 23–20, with just over three minutes to go. But a botched extra point gave the Ducks—and Villegas—life. With less than three minutes to play, Feeley led the Ducks from deep in their territory into the Trojans’. Villegas, on the sideline taking practice swings with his right leg, waited for a signal from Bellotti. “I wanted to be on the field. I wasn’t scared of it, I didn’t shy away from it,” Villegas remembers. Once the Ducks crossed the 50-yard line, he told Bellotti, “I’m ready when you are.”

“Being a Southern California boy,” Villegas adds, “to have that opportunity to give our team a chance to beat them, I was looking forward to it.”

His time came with thirty seconds left in regulation. Villegas set up on the right hash mark for a 26-yarder. His holder was Joey Harrington, who by season’s end would be the Ducks starting quarterback. As he had done twenty-six out of his previous thirty attempts, Villegas sent his kick easily through the uprights, tying the score at 23, and setting off a delirious celebration among the remaining fans in Autzen.

But on the field the celebration was more awkward—and costly. Harrington and Villegas both leaped after the kick, and then Harrington tried to hug his kicker from behind. But while trying to turn, Villegas got his right foot stuck in the turf. His knee twisted and he crumpled to the ground. Villegas was carried off the field by two teammates, his night over. He had a torn ACL that would jeopardize the Ducks’ chances of beating beat USC—and severely limit his future football career.

“If they don’t have him going into the extra period,” Steve Physioc, Fox Sports Net’s play-by-play announcer, told viewers, “what a huge loss that would be.”

But the backup to the backup placekicker would not let the night go dark for Oregon.

A snap, a kick, a shot at history

After a scoreless first overtime, the Ducks took the lead in the second on a short Feeley touchdown pass. Bellotti then faced a crucial call: go with second-stringer Dan Katz to kick the extra point or try Josh Frankel. Katz, used mostly on kickoffs, had badly missed a possible game-winning field goal attempt in the first overtime. That miss made Bellotti’s choice—Frankel—a bit easier, although it caught Frankel off guard. He still had Villegas on his mind. “He’s a close friend,” Frankel says, “and I’m thinking about him more than thinking I’m gonna get into the game.”

Frankel was not a stranger to pressure. As a freshman in 1996, he kicked two extra points against Washington. The following year, he became a mid-season starter, helping the Ducks upset no. 6 Washington, 31–28, with a field goal and four extra points. But when the All-American Villegas arrived for the 1998 season, Frankel moved back in the depth chart—until moving back front and center on this late September night. His extra point gave Oregon a 30–23 lead.

“[Frankel] relished the opportunity to compete in practice,” Bellotti says. “You see that [competitiveness] in the guy’s eyes.”

USC matched the score on their next drive, forcing a third overtime—and what turned out to be a showdown between placekickers. USC’s David Newbury had the chance to give the Trojans the lead, but a 37-yard attempt fell short, his third miss of the game. Ducks ball. Two rushes by Derien Latimer set up a first and ten from the USC 11-yard line. Frankel figured Bellotti would use a couple plays, inch the ball closer, maybe secure the win with a touchdown. Instead, on first down, Frankel got the call.

“[Frankel] relished the opportunity to compete in practice. You see that in the guy’s eyes.”

—Mike Bellotti

“It was a *Rudy*-type moment where the third stringer comes on with a chance to win the game,” says the kicker who grew up in Pacific Palisades, California, fifteen miles from Hollywood, referencing the 1993 sports-drama film. “Nobody would have drawn up that script. Fortunately, my mind was very clear. I was just excited to be there and didn’t really have time to digest the significance of the play. It was probably a lot more stressful for my mom watching on TV.”

The snap came to Harrington. Frankel took three strides toward the planted ball, swung his right leg like a seven iron and secured a 33–30 win for the Ducks. And, as Jorgensen says, “etch his name in history.”

Teammates mobbed Frankel, lifting no. 32 off the ground and carrying him across the field. He was swarmed by Oregon fans, who had waited four hours and twenty minutes for the game’s outcome. Eventually, he found his father. “It’s a moment I will always cherish, especially that he is no longer here,” Frankel says of the hug he shared with his dad, who died in 2021. “To have that moment together was very, very special.”

In the Ducks training room, Nathan Villegas was dealing with different emotions. Until that night, he had NFL scouts in pursuit. But while he eventually returned to play in a few of the Ducks’ remaining games that season, he went undrafted, teams scared off by the torn ACL. He has spent his post-Oregon years working in sales, satisfied with his personal and professional life, but aware of what a freak injury cost him. “I love Josh Frankel. He’s a great dude and it was awesome to see him make that kick,” says Villegas, 46, who, with his wife, Crystal, is raising five children. “Of course, it sucked for me because it was the only opportunity I [would have] in college to get a game-winning field goal.”



hoto: Oregon Athletics/Eric Evans)



(photo: Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard)

Frankel, 45, finished his football career the following season and has been in the financial service business for the past fifteen years. In 2021, he received the Leo Harris Award, which honors a UO alumni letterman. His days are now busy with work and, with his wife, Amy, raising three kids in the Portland area. “There was a point in time where [the kick] was the greatest moment in my life, but now with kids and other things . . .” Frankel says, chuckling. But every now and then, someone will recognize him and ask, “Are you that Josh Frankel?” And when he walks by his eleven-year-old son’s bedroom, he’ll see a photo of “The Kick” hanging from a wall. And buried somewhere in his garage is the game ball his teammates gave the walk-on after his 27-yarder. And some nights he’ll go to YouTube and watch a grainy video from twenty-four years ago, and then he’ll share what he sees with kids who were not in Autzen Stadium the night no. 32, the backup to the backup, beat the giant.

“I’ve used that as a lesson now that I’m coaching a lot of my kids’ sports,” Frankel says. “Just always be ready. You truly don’t know when your number will be called.”

Charles Butler is an instructor in the School of Journalism and Communication.

The Ducks open the [2023 season](#) against Portland State Saturday, Sept. 2, at noon PT in Autzen Stadium. They host USC November 11.

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SUMMER 2023

Your Viking Guide to Self-Care

Thorfinn—former footballer Devan Long’s character on “Ghosts”—offers health tips for being strong as a pirate Norseman

By Thorfinn, as told to Sharleen Nelson • Ghosts photos courtesy Bertrand Calmeau/CBS • July 12, 2023

3 min read



They may have lived a thousand years apart, but former Ducks defensive end [Devan Long](#), BS 2006 (political science), and Thorfinn, BA 1007 (pillaging arts), the Viking warrior character he plays on the CBS show *Ghosts*, have one thing in common: both support a healthy lifestyle.

From getting a good workout to eating healthy foods to dealing with complex emotions, follow these sensible Viking “Thorfinnisms” to stay mentally and physically fit.

1

“Start day with hearty Viking yell: let you know you are awake and alive!”



2



“Chopping wood great way to get Viking workout. Train hard; crush Danes.”

“Seek large objects and lift. Animate heavy things—best done with yelling, followed by large laughter to let everyone know it’s not heavy for you.”

3

“Wrestle wolves. If not have wolves, dogs. No dogs? Neighbor pets will do.”



4



“Laughing always best medicine. Make laughter everywhere at all times, especially during inappropriate moments, whether it’s by yourself, with stranger, or with neighbor dog wolves.”

5

“Get in touch with nature. Find flower or bush and regale it with story. Trees make good listeners for deep secrets.”



6



“When shearing lawn wear battle gear. Thorfinn forever prepared for anything—crab grass, weeds, rocks, battle.”

“If have children, make them pillow fort, then hide and strike when they are not expecting. If not have own children, use children of friends or family.”

7

“When Viking pillaging is done, hunt food. Cod or meat. Ribeye best with much butter.”

“If food not found in wilderness, hunt in grocery store. Hang out in produce section and test avocados. Make Viking dad jokes about vegetables to random unamused shoppers.”

“Feast with family. If no family, go to restaurant and sit at random family’s table. Tell joke, then laugh together, they are now family for day.”



8



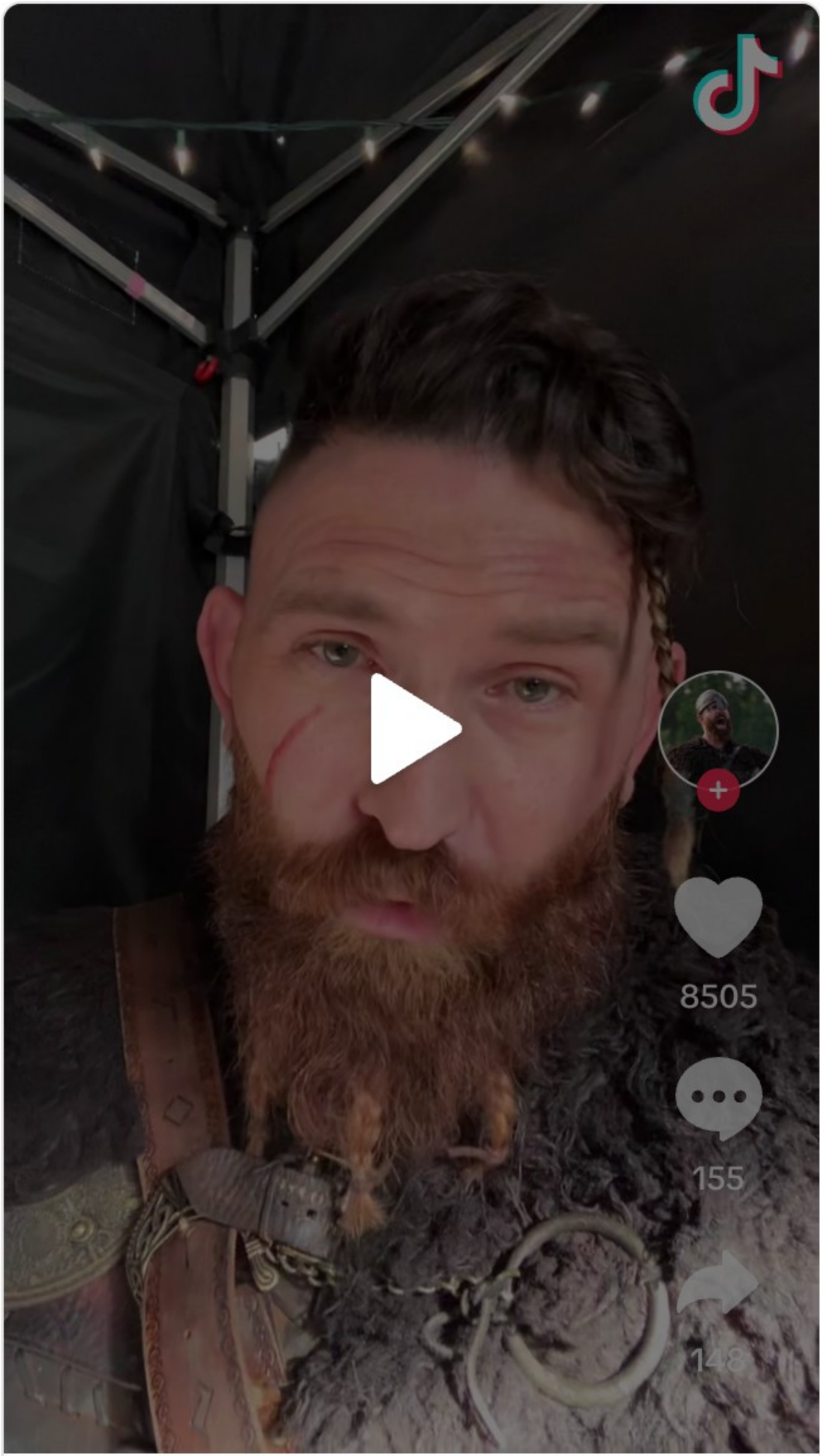
“For big feelings, get ‘Thorapy.’” (Thorfinn attended therapy sessions to cope with night terrors over being abandoned and then having to kill and eat his best friend Oskar, a squirrel. “Thor not talk. Dream very painful.”)

9

“Make friends of many. Thor love all friends—ghost and human.”



10



“Locate local sorceress and receive wisdom. If sorceress unavailable, listen to Enya song and ponder deep thoughts. Speak to ravens. Offer them snack.”

[Long](#) resides in Topanga, California, with his wife, Jesse Golden, and their son, Kaleo. Golden is a holistic health practitioner, author, and creator of the [Golden Secrets](#), a line of organic wellness products.

When he’s not slipping into leather and fur and channeling Thorfinn, Long enjoys weight training, cooking, paddle tennis, playing with his dogs (Long provided the photo for Tip No. 3), surfing with his son, and relaxing at home. Even Vikings need a rest once in a while.

“*Ghosts* is a full-time job,” he says. “We shoot twenty-two episodes in Montreal from June until January. You get a little exhausted so when you’re done, you’re like, ‘Aaaah, just do nothing.’”



Stream the first two seasons of [Ghosts](#) on Paramount +.

Sharleen Nelson, BS ’06 (journalism: magazine, news editorial), is a staff writer for University Communications.

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SUMMER 2023

Six Ways to Kick a Bad Mood

Tips from psychologist Ruth Ellingsen will put the skip back in your step

By Matt Cooper • Illustration by David Gill • July 12, 2023

3 min read



Even experts in psychotherapy get the blues.

So says [Ruth Ellingsen](#), a clinical assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences' [Department of Psychology](#) and a member of the Faculty Leadership Council for the [Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health](#).

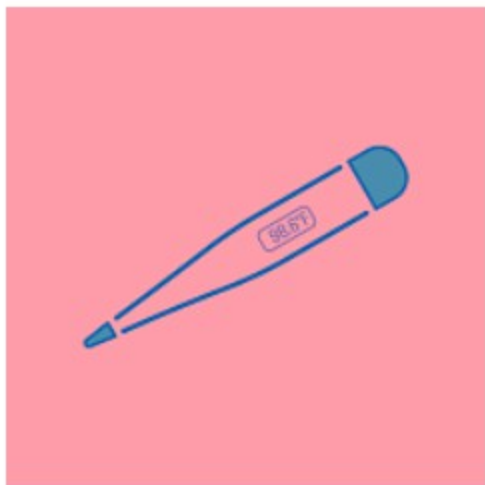
But when Ellingsen feels down, she uses the following tips to get back into a positive mindset. "You can't just tell yourself to feel better," she says. "But you can change the thoughts and behaviors that help influence your mood."



Ellingsen

1

Take Your Feelings Temperature



Measure your mood with a "feeling thermometer," where colors represent the intensity of discomfort: green (feeling comfortable, e.g. calm or happy); yellow (slightly uncomfortable, e.g. tired or distracted); orange (more uncomfortable, e.g. nervous, frustrated); and red (very uncomfortable, e.g. depressed, angry).

Taking your feelings temperature will help you figure out what to do about it—in fact, that mindfulness alone is a step toward feeling better.

2

Stay in the Moment



Oftentimes when we're in a bad mood, we're worrying about something in the future. And the vast majority of the things we worry about never happen.

Deep breathing or tuning into your senses can redirect you to the present moment and ease anxiety.

Try "four by four breathing": inhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds. Or tune in to your environment with the 5-4-3-2-1 exercise: name five things you can see, four you can hear, three you can touch, two you can smell, one you can taste.

3

Take a Mental Trip



You can go somewhere pleasant without actually going there, and that can help you relax.

Visualize an especially satisfying memory: an unforgettable trip or favorite forest hike. Even imagining yourself at home in bed can aid your physiological response to stress.

4

Prosecute Problem Thoughts



Our minds are prone to distorting, catastrophizing, mind-reading, and assuming others’ intentions—all behaviors that aren’t necessarily based in reality but can put us in a tailspin. Examine problem thoughts closely and check the facts.

“Look at the evidence—is there an alternative way of thinking about a situation?” Ellingsen says. “That person who didn’t say ‘hi’ and therefore doesn’t like you—is it possible they just didn’t see you?”

5

Work It Out with a Quick Workout



Muscle relaxation can trick your body into calming down: make a fist and then relax it, or shrug your shoulders up high and then let them go.

Likewise, it can help to increase your heart rate briefly with five to ten minutes of cardiovascular exercise. Do some stairs, run around the block—whatever is within your fitness level.

6

Put Yourself on Ice



Some tricks for calming yourself are based on body chemistry.

Especially if you’re angry, one thing that is actually quite effective is to literally cool down your body—take an ice pack and put it on your forehead. There is a connection between temporarily lowering your body temperature and feeling a sense of relaxation.

“It can also help you with sleeping,” Ellingsen says. “It’s a pretty cool technique. No pun intended.”

Matt Cooper is managing editor for *Oregon Quarterly*.

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While traveling in Normandy, Lake (straw hat) and a friend came across a Morgan Roadster (photo courtesy Jane Lake)

Letters to the Editor: Travel and Running are Keys to Better Living

Responding to an OQ survey, readers divulge the ingredients to their secret sauce

July 12, 2023
3 min read



Spin the Globe and Go

Travel abroad and be a gypsy. Teaching high school as a special educator has more stressors than ever. Last summer, I truly got away by visiting a friend who lives in France for a month. We drove to the seaside village of Cabourg on the Cote Fleurie, stayed in Normandy with her family. Took day trips to Rouen and left from Paris. It was such a departure and worthy splurge. I plan to go somewhere cool every year for my sanity. This December, I’m meeting up with friends from Sarajevo, Lithuania and Detroit in: Egypt.

Jane Lake, MS ’11 (special education)

Rockaway Park, New York

How Running Saved My Life

Three months after achieving my first summit of Mount Hood, I learned that coronary heart disease had made me a walking “time bomb.”

On the morning of September 4, 2004, I completed an eighteen-mile marathon training run in preparation to run the Portland Marathon. During a shower after my run, I experienced unusually rapid heart palpitations. When the sensation reached my jaw—a telltale sign of a heart attack—my wife took me to the ER.

My initial EKG revealed a heart attack. The interventional cardiologist immediately sent me to the emergency room and performed a heart catheterization, which showed blockage in three of four coronary arteries. The next thing I knew I was being flown to the Johns Hopkins Hospital for further evaluation and probable coronary artery bypass surgery. I underwent a triple bypass the following day.

As my cardiologist explained, my running regimen had literally created a “supplemental” cardiovascular system. It allowed me to continue running, climb Mount Hood, and enjoy a good life, though admittedly a life ignorant of my heart disease. I realize now that I would not have survived my heart attack had I not been an active runner.

I am writing this article to tell others of my experience and, perhaps, to prevent them from suffering the same fate. All my controllable risk factors for heart disease were well within acceptable limits. But here was one thing I could not control, and that was heredity. My father had undergone bypass surgery at age seventy-four, so I knew there was a family history. But I could not believe I'd be susceptible to a heart attack at age fifty-seven.

If my experience with heart disease has even created any concern in your mind, I highly recommend that you review your risk factors with a cardiologist who may recommend an echocardiogram. If the results are negative, you will be much more at peace. Positive results would give you the chance to do something about it before you suffer a potentially fatal heart attack.

While I no longer run, I maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating a healthy diet and almost daily trips to the gym. My cardiovascular workouts include spinning, swimming, and walking.

I’m motivated to live as long as possible by my wife, who has Parkinson’s disease, and who needs me to be her caregiver. My two grandchildren also provide additional motivation.

Jon Meyer, BA ’69 (mathematics)

Baltimore, Maryland



Running proved critical to Meyer’s cardiovascular health and he keeps active today (courtesy Jon Meyer)

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The UO’s Bob Anet receives the 1939 NCAA basketball championship trophy in front of Ohio State player James Hull (courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, UO Libraries)

Writer’s Devotion Dates to Nursing Program, Tall Firs

Memories of a festive tour through Bend after the UO clinched the title

August 21, 2023
1 min read



Thanks for the Memories

I have appreciated being a U of O alum and keeping in touch for many years. My being a U of O fan started even before my enrollment in the five-year U of O nursing degree program in 1947. In 1939, when I was ten years old, I and a car full of neighbor kids were packed in my friend Eva’s dad’s big, old car. Mr. Moore drove us around Bend, Oregon, with horn honking and us hanging out the windows, yelling and waving. The Tall Fir basketball team from the University of Oregon had just won the national basketball tourney.

I have appreciated keeping in touch as an alum and fan. I still have four football season tickets and am deciding if I can still walk to Autzen Stadium for this fall’s games. I have looked forward to receiving the *Quarterly* by mail and now hope I’ve pushed the right buttons to get the *Quarterly* via the web.

Thanks, and GO DUCKS!

Shirley Fossen Kingsbury, BS ’52 (nursing/medical technology)

Eugene, Oregon

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Happiness 101

In the classroom and outside it, neuroscientist David McCormick is leading a mindfulness revolution

By Henry Houston • August 21, 2023

6 min read



For several years around 2014, David McCormick spent a few weeks each summer teaching neuroscience to Buddhist monks in Tibetan monasteries in India. He brought back lessons in the nature of happiness.



David McCormick

“Even though people in rural India have, most of the time, far fewer material goods than we do—and certainly monks have very few material possessions—they appear to be much happier,” says McCormick, a Presidential Chair and director of the Institute of Neuroscience at the University of Oregon. “They’re much calmer, peaceful, connected, loving, kind.”

Each time McCormick returned to the US, he was jarred by the reintroduction to American attitudes. Despite this country’s advantages, he says—the abundance of food, clean hot or cold water with the turn of a faucet handle, reliable electricity—“our minds are a living hell.”

“We’ve convinced ourselves somehow that life is terrible and it’s getting worse,” says McCormick. There are certainly tremendous problems, he adds, “but we’ve lost the appreciation of life and a connection with the world around us.”

McCormick is now at the heart of a booming happiness enterprise at the UO, aiming to restore those connections and inspire students to examine how their minds mold reality. His science-based course, Happiness: A Neuroscience and Psychology Perspective, is one of the most popular electives on campus.

“A course like this is really needed—and that’s the most common comment I receive from students,” McCormick says. “They love the material. They love learning new ways to de-stress, to change their mindsets, to be happier and healthier. They love opening up and talking about how to engage in life with meaning and purpose. They tell their friends. Most of the tremendous growth has been word-of-mouth. This is not a required class for any major.”

“Students love opening up and talking about how to engage in life with meaning and purpose.”

With a three-year, \$900,000 grant from the Tiny Blue Dot Foundation, McCormick and a team of researchers will study the impact the course and mindfulness have on students’ brains, with the goal of sharing the curriculum with the world. He also hopes to introduce the wider campus community to what he teaches in the classroom.

Letting bad thoughts pass like clouds overhead

It isn’t the first time that happiness is the focus of a course.

In 2018, Yale professor Laurie Santos drew national attention for filling lecture halls and auditoriums with a course on the science of happiness. [McCormick](#), a former colleague of Santos’s at Yale, was inspired to offer a similar course at

the UO to address the worsening mental crisis in the US.

“The rates of depression have been going up since World War II—it’s not a new thing, it’s not just an internet thing,” says McCormick, a professor of biology and neuroscience in the [College of Arts and Sciences](#). “We are materialistically, measurably in a better place, but psychologically we are suffering more and more. We have to ask ourselves: why?”

About six hundred students are enrolled for the fall term. In the course, McCormick encourages students to examine how thoughts affect one’s outlook. They explore meditation, journaling, health, and other tools to improve how they perceive the world around them.



Enrollment in the happiness class has swelled to six hundred students, from eighty-five just three years ago (photo: David McCormick)

Over the years, McCormick has seen many students with poor self-esteem, thinking of themselves as not smart, not capable—the list goes on. McCormick asks them: if you don’t have time to shower in the morning, do you think other people notice?

“They all say yes,” he says. “But then I ask them, ‘If someone *else* doesn’t shower, do you have that thought about them?’ Almost no one does. It’s just the way our mind works. We think all these negative things about ourselves but almost no one else thinks them about us.”

Students incorporate ideas learned in the course toward leading a happier life. For the final project, some step away from social media for a month, or start exercising, or engage in mindfulness meditation—alone or with friends or family. Students design their own projects and many try something new, such as a month of daily meditation.

“The question we are addressing here is, ‘How does mindfulness affect how our brains engage with feelings of fear, stress, and a sense of being overwhelmed?’”

Mindfulness is a way to acknowledge your thoughts, but there’s a misconception that you have to stop completely thinking, says Liz Riebe, BA ’22 (global studies). She met McCormick atop Spencer Butte one day in 2022, a chance encounter that led to her joining his [Center for the Science and Practice of Well-Being](#) and the [Institute of Neuroscience](#), where she’s a research assistant.

“The common metaphor is that your awareness is the sky and your thoughts are the clouds,” she says. “Your thoughts are not attached to you because you think them. You have to let your thoughts pass by, like clouds in the sky.”

Psychology major Luna Dare was so inspired by the class she started the [Positive Psychology Club](#) and introduced her family to mindfulness. For them, she developed questions to encourage being consciously “in the present.”

“Be curious about your thoughts and follow them: why am I thinking this? What’s going on?” she says. Not everyone in the family experienced a huge improvement in happiness, but as McCormick does for hundreds of students each term, Dare introduced a practice that her family can use in the future.

Catching collegiates at a critical time

With the support of the Tiny Blue Dot Foundation, McCormick and colleagues will study how the brain is influenced by taking his course in conjunction with mindfulness practice or daily journaling.

McCormick, a biologist, collaborated with Elliot Berkman, a psychology professor and dean of natural sciences at the college, illustrating the interdisciplinary nature of neuroscience.

“We know quite a bit about the neuroscience of this topic from the straightforward, ‘This is your brain on mindfulness’ types of studies,” Berkman says. “But the question we are addressing here is, ‘How does mindfulness affect how our brains engage with feelings of fear, stress, and a sense of being overwhelmed?’”

The third team leader, Megan Lipsett, a PhD student in Berkman’s lab, is one of the few practitioners in Lane County certified to teach mindfulness-based stress reduction.

College-aged students are at a critical window because they’re in a developmental process of identity formation, where habits become embedded while they’re also experiencing high levels of stress. “When we have centers like the one that David is starting up, there are opportunities to really interface with the community,” Lipsett says. “We can make an impact in the Eugene community in ways that reach outside of those walls.”



The Positive Psychology club, open to all students, meets on the science of happiness and how to thrive in life (photo: Myla Gilbert)

Make your mind a happy home

McCormick also plans to offer the UO community access to ways to [change how they look at the world](#).

Grant money will support McCormick’s center to organize events, retreats, and discounted mindfulness-based stress reduction workshops. He’ll also host speakers, starting November 2 with Stanford neurobiologist Andrew Huberman, who runs the popular *Huberman Lab* podcast.

Engaging with people is McCormick’s mission, whether he’s in the classroom, at the psychology club where he serves as a faculty advisor, or atop Spencer Butte, with his dog Sasha by his side.

“We’re trying to get people to be more aware, to live deliberately,” McCormick says. “To understand what a well-lived life is and do it purposefully. I want students to take home this simple message: you spend a lifetime in your mind—make it a nice place to be.”

Henry Houston, MA ’17 (international studies), is an information representative in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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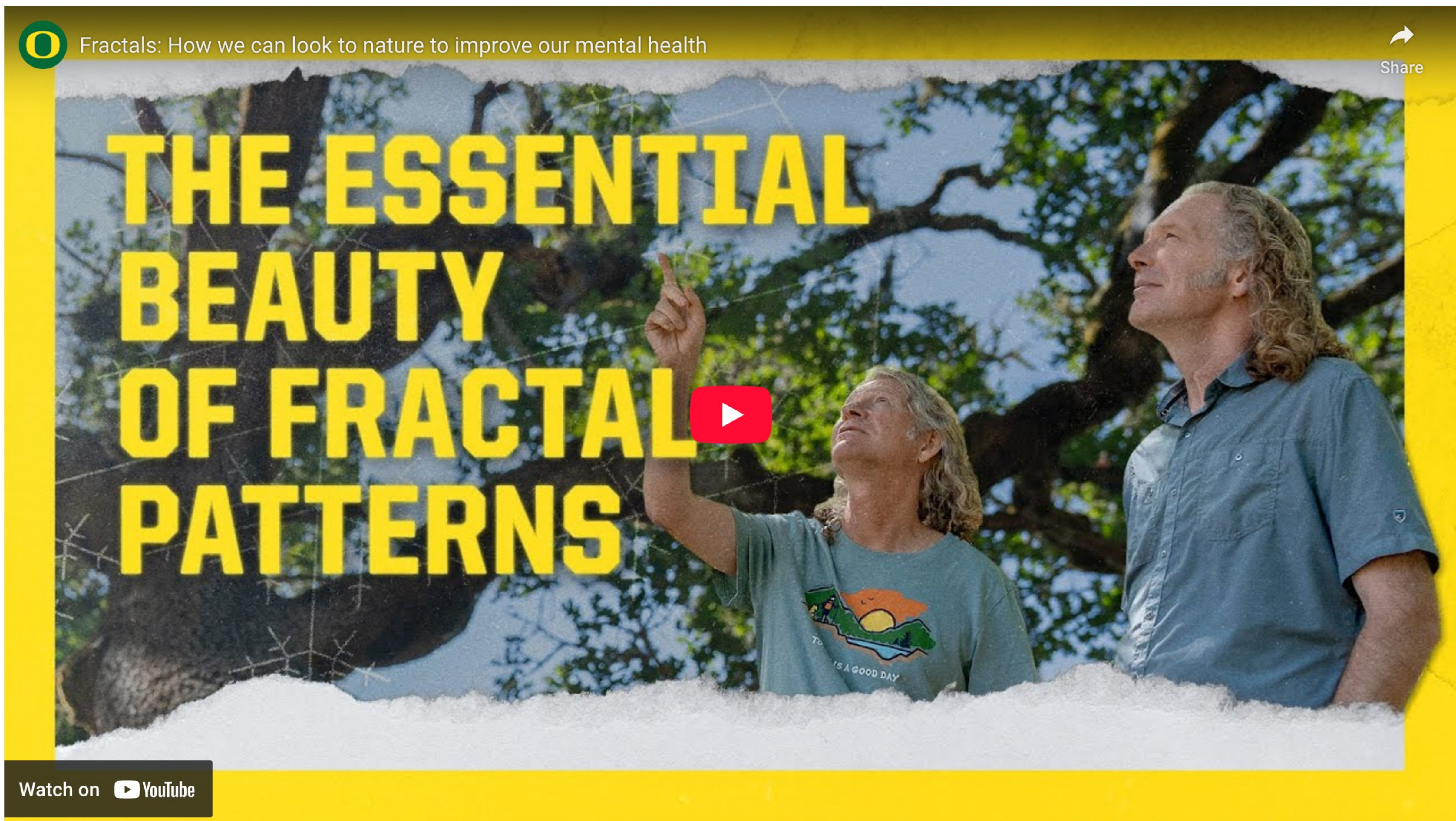
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The Essential Beauty of Fractal Patterns

The repeating patterns in nature are more than just aesthetically pleasing, UO professors say—they’re important in managing stress

Video by UO Creative Media · August 21, 2023



Think of a tree. First you see the big branches growing out of the trunk. Then you see smaller versions growing out of each big branch. As you keep zooming in, finer and finer branches appear, all the way down to the smallest twigs.

These are “fractals”: patterns that repeat at increasingly fine magnifications. Nature is filled with fractals—and that’s a good thing, say two University of Oregon professors, because humans turn to them for well-being.

In a new *Oregon Quarterly* video by UO Creative Media, physics professor [Richard Taylor](#) and [Richard York](#), a professor of sociology and environmental studies, discuss fractals in nature and their benefit to mental health. Humans are visual creatures, the Richards note, and we reduce our stress substantially simply by viewing the beautiful fractals within clouds, rivers, coastlines, mountains, and more.

Unfortunately, we are increasingly divorcing ourselves from fractals. We’re spending less time in nature and more in built environments, including offices. At the same time, human-caused climate change is rapidly destroying natural fractals—consider a wildfire ravaging a forest or a glacier tumbling into the ocean.

Given the importance of fractals to our happiness, the professors ask, will we reconsider our relationship to nature? It’s not a rhetorical question.

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The Beauty of Campus in Tree Dimensions

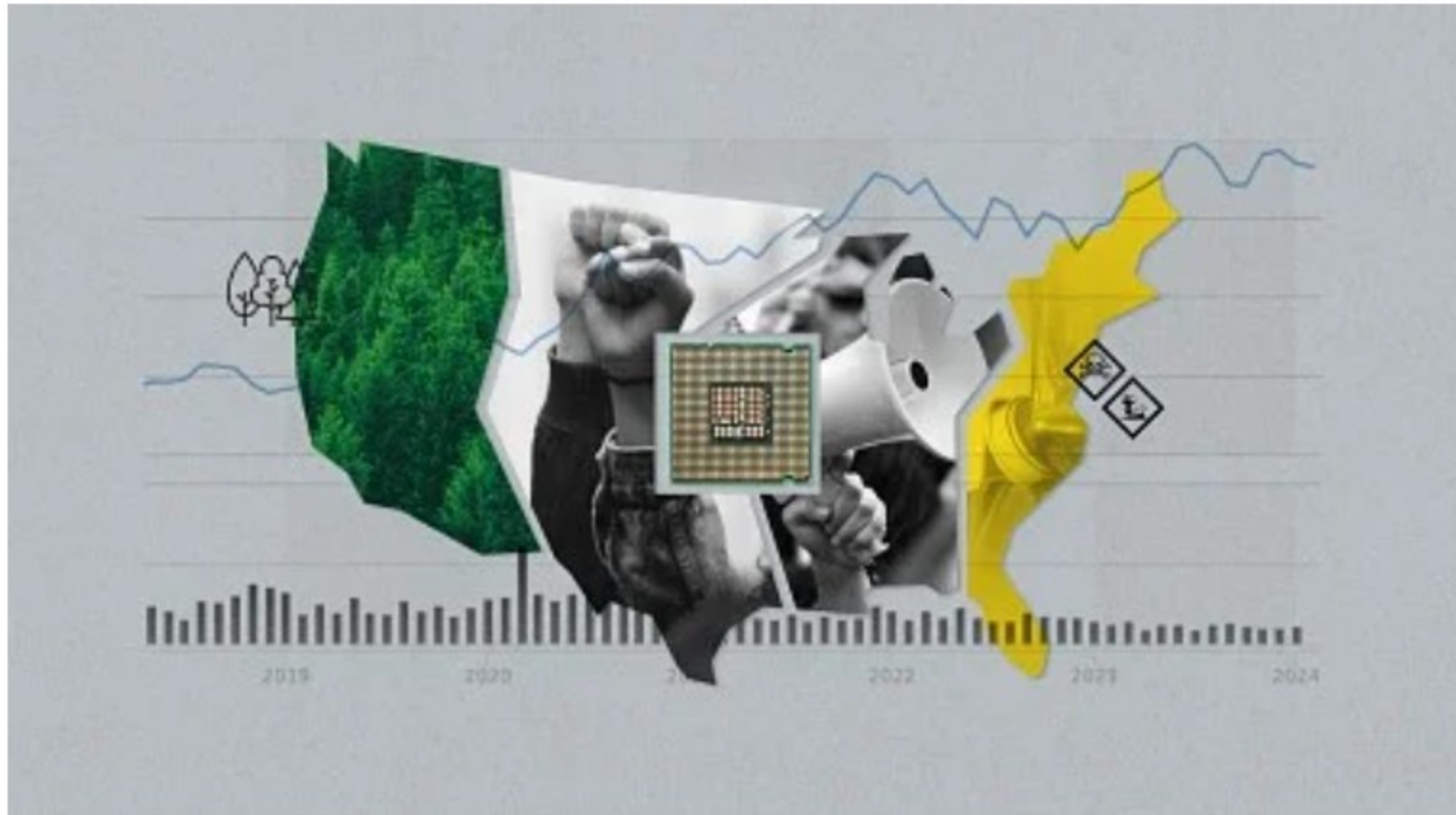
Native species, thriving transplants, and majestic memorials contribute to the UO experience



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SUMMER 2023

Religious Scholar Courts Controversy with “Creating the Qur’an”

Stephen Shoemaker challenges claims adopted by Muslims and non-Muslims alike

By Sharleen Nelson · August 17, 2023

5 min read



When Stephen Shoemaker set out to write *Creating the Qur’an: A Historical-Critical Study*, a book exploring the origins of the Qur’an, he was aware it might be controversial, but the University of Oregon professor approached it the way he would any other text—through unbiased research based on scientific methods and historical evidence.

One of only a handful of scholars to attempt to unlock the puzzling origin of the Qur’an, believed by Muslims to be a literal transcript of God’s speech, Shoemaker challenges traditional claims adopted by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Because Islamic tradition has historically defined the text and controlled its interpretation, the book fuels scientific debate—and controversy—concerning the authenticity, historicity, and canonization of the Qur’an.

Offered as an open-access publication, the 2022 book can be downloaded free from [University of California Press](#). A Kindle version is also available on [Amazon](#).

[Professor Shoemaker](#) is the Ira E. Gaston Fellow in Christian Studies in the [Department of Religious Studies](#) of the [College of Arts and Sciences](#). He defines religious studies as a historical analysis of how religions developed in terms of culture, politics, economy, and literature.



Stephen Shoemaker

But when its focus is Islam, emotions can run high.

Last year, for example, author Salmon Rushdie was on stage to speak in New York when he was attacked by a supporter of the radical group Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. In 2015, Muslim extremists forced their way into the offices of the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, killing twelve people and injuring eleven others for publishing cartoons of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

In publishing [Creating the Qur’an](#), Shoemaker says, “people jokingly asked if I’ll start wearing a Kevlar vest to work.” But he notes the only real pushback has been from academic colleagues, mainly Islamic scholars, in nonviolent ways.

“There seems to be a reluctance to allow these kinds of critical questions,” Shoemaker says. “But if we’re going to have a discipline of religious studies, we must study religion ‘critically’ as part of the secular academy, and we have to do it in a way that treats all religions on an equal basis and asks the same questions and expects the same things in terms of evidence.”

Shoemaker is also the author of [The Death of a Prophet](#), [The Apocalypse of Empire](#), and [A Prophet Has Appeared](#), among other publications, and he is presently working on a short historical study on the life of Muhammad.

In *Creating the Qur’an*, he approaches the central Islamic text as a historical artifact, examining every significant controversy about the Qur’an, its history, and its canonization by studying historical documents, applying advanced scientific methods, and researching the linguistic history of Arabic and the social and cultural history of the late ancient Near East.

One question is the age of the Qur’an. Shoemaker and other scholars have turned to radiocarbon dating in search of an answer. Developed in the late 1940s, radiocarbon dating, or carbon-14 dating, is a method to determine the age of organic materials as old as sixty thousand years. Attempts have been made to date the parchment (made from animal hides) of several early Qur’anic manuscripts, but so far, the method has proven unreliable for establishing the precise time frames that scholars seek.



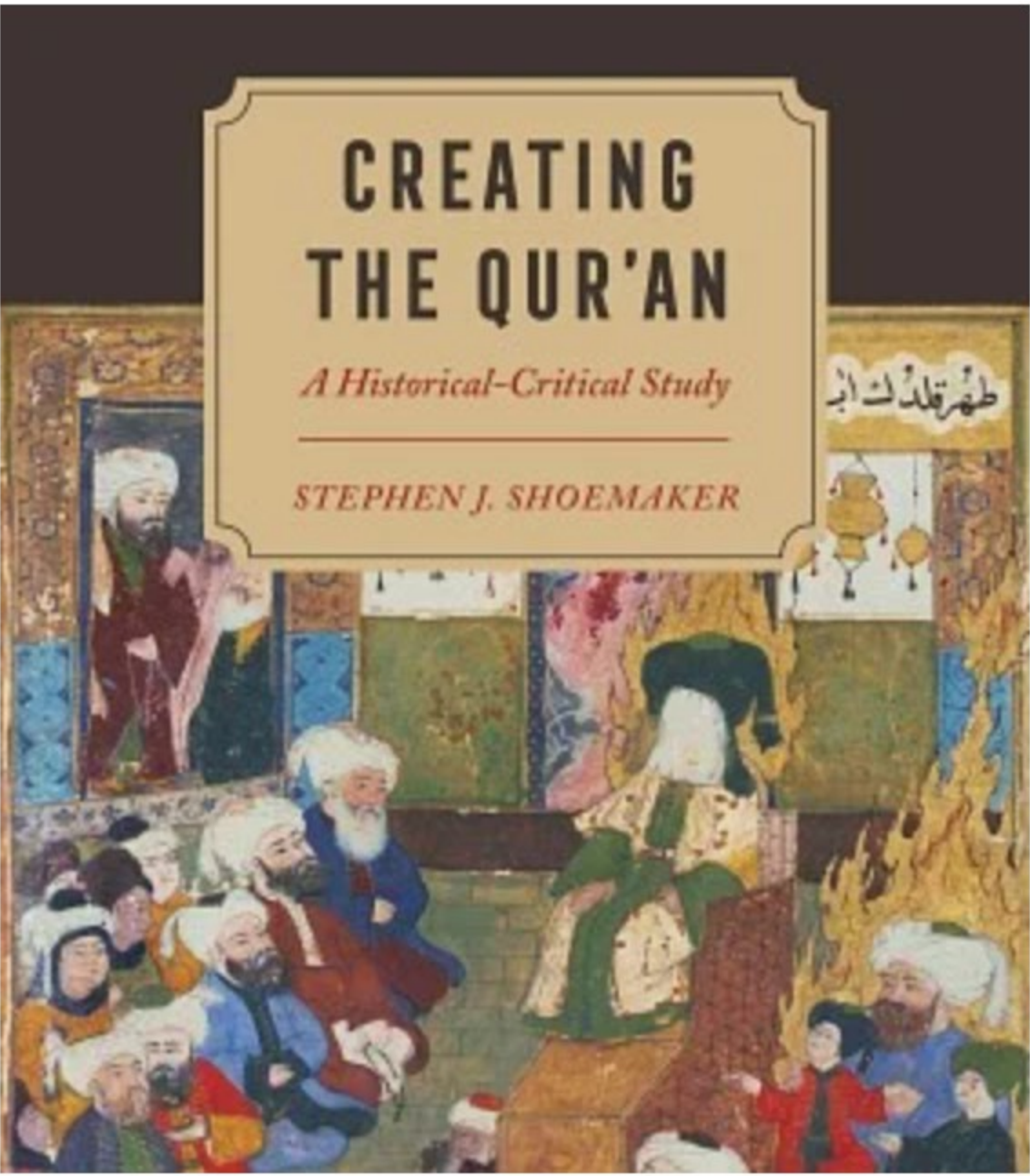
The Birmingham Quran manuscript is a single sheet of parchment on which two leaves of an early Qur’anic manuscript have been written (courtesy Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham)

“Radiocarbon dating is fantastic if you want to date something to a century or two. If you want to see if an object is late medieval or early medieval, radiocarbon dating is your best method. It’s rock solid,” he says. “The problem comes if you want to date something to 650–670 CE. The method can’t do that with sufficient accuracy. It might give you some data that you like, but in the end, you have to be really cautious when you’re trying to get that narrow.” Shoemaker concluded that the canonical text of the Qur’an was most likely produced around the turn of the eighth century.

Likewise, because most of Muhammad’s teaching was not initially written down, the early texts that became the Qur’an were transmitted for decades from memory and by oral tradition. Shoemaker’s research highlights that memory, compared to a written record, is unreliable. For instance, research in memory science has demonstrated that verbatim recall of a text of more than fifty words is beyond the capacity of human memory, absent a written text.

“This book was personally the most edifying book I have ever written. I learned so much about myself working on the chapters on memory.”

“People remembered these important texts later on in ways that highlighted the importance of the text for their present circumstances rather than recalling what really happened,” he says. “Historians are always looking for probability. We can’t definitely say what happened, but we can say that ‘this’ is a lot more probable than ‘that’ is.”



“This book was personally the most edifying book I have ever written,” Shoemaker says. “I learned so much about myself working on the chapters on memory. I’m more attuned to memory as a sort of defining quality of human existence and how it works and how it doesn’t work and why it works the way it does.”

The book is not required reading in Shoemaker’s Religion 102: World Religions: Near Eastern Traditions, an undergraduate course on the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. But critical examination of all religions equally, he says, is as fundamental to the classroom as it is to scholarship.

“What this book is about is preserving a certain consistency within the discipline of religious studies intellectually and pedagogically,” says

Shoemaker. “I have no problem with Christians who believe something different about the Bible or Muslims who believe something different about the Qur’an. It’s not for me to say ‘this way is true and this way is false.’ I tried to be really sensitive, but also to look at it through the critical lens of a scholar, historian, and scientist.”

Sharleen Nelson, BS ’06 (journalism: magazine, news editorial), is a staff writer for University Communications.

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