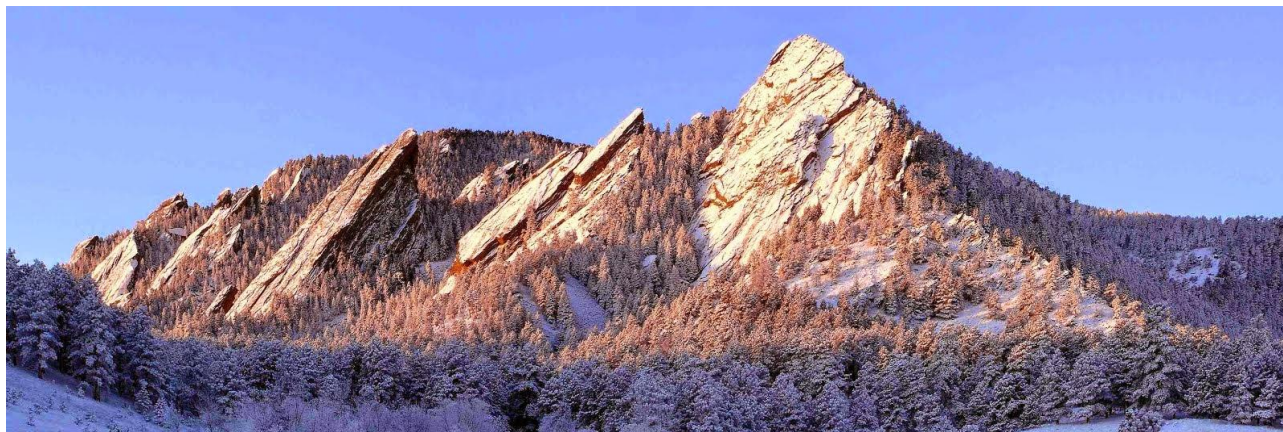


# 37th Annual Meeting Society for Descriptive Psychology



**October 22 - 25, 2015**  
**American Mountaineering Center**  
**Golden, CO**

The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a Community exploring the Person Concept: The interdependent conceptual framework of Person, Behavior, Language, and World to create common ground for the Human Sciences.

This year's diverse topics range from clarifying the concept of **Social Justice**, discussion of appropriate treatment approaches for the variety of **Dementias**, and the place of embodiment and biological "explanation" in Descriptive Psychology. Other presentations will examine the concept of *Alief*, elucidate science denialism, explore the contribution of Descriptive Psychology to conflict resolution, and present a variety clinical cases that are conceptualized using a Descriptive Psychology framework.

The goal of this year's conference is to continue the exploration of Descriptive Psychology as a conceptual approach to a broad range of topics within the behavioral sciences, neurobehavioral sciences, social sciences, and humanities, continue building the Descriptive Psychology Community, and to promote further discussion about new approaches to disseminating Descriptive Psychology concepts and applications.

## **Registration Information**

[Click here to register for the Conference and Continuing Education credits!](#)

Attendees will be able to earn up to 13.5 Continuing Education credits during the meeting.

Registration on or before September 15th includes the Banquet and meals.

The fee for the Banquet will require a separate payment of \$80 after that date.

**In-person registration  
will be available  
at the American Mountaineering Center  
on the days of the program.**

# 2015 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## October 22-25

[The American Mountaineering Center Golden, CO](#)

### THURSDAY, OCT 22, EVENING SESSION

3:30 - 5:25            Board meeting (AMC Drumwright Board Room)  
                              Snacks and drinks will be served

5:30 - 6:30            Check in/Meet and Greet (AMC)  
                              A light dinner buffet will be served

6:30 - 7:00            *The Conference will be convened*  
*Announcements*  
*Introduction of the President*

7:00 - 8:30            *Presidential Address: Social Progress and the Just Choice*  
Wynn Schwartz, Ph.D.  
William James College and Harvard University

Abstract: Among the intrinsic motivations, the weighing of ethical and moral reason stands alongside aesthetics as quintessentially humane attributes that mark personhood in a way self-interest and pleasure cannot. Further, ethical and moral perspectives guide the varied notions of justice and fairness central to any liberal and cosmopolitan view of social progress.

What I'd like to explore is the problem of making a "just" choice or judgment: what facilitates or interferes. Since my concern is also with the idea of social justice and progress, I'll need to examine the politics of negotiation and agreement.

To explore these questions, I'll modify certain conceptual tools from Descriptive Psychology, notably the Judgment Diagram, to map out and clarify some of the dilemmas of social justice and progress. Since actual social engagement involves personal and interpersonal conflict, ignorance, and self-deception, I'll develop a model of negotiation that involves at least two actors

with limited options given their values and the blind spots in their observer-critic characteristics. All this is complicated since social conflict has ideological, religious, class, race, age, gender and, as recently argued, species biases and interests that might not be reconcilable.

I'll employ well known themes in the philosophy of justice, in particular John Rawls' veil of ignorance, Hannah Arendt on moral dialog and negotiation, along with Anthony Putman's work on community and irreconcilable values. Additionally, I'll provide some thoughts of my own on inclusion and empathy and conclude with a hypothesis on the inevitability of social progress and reaction.

### **FRIDAY, OCT 23, MORNING SESSION**

Introductions by Shirley Weisz

8:15 - 9:00

Breakfast  
(served in the AMC Conference Room)

9:00 - 10:00

***Why is Behavior Not Reducible to Biological States of Affairs?***

Ray Bergner, PhD  
Professor of Clinical Psychology  
Department of Psychology  
Illinois State University

Abstract: This talk, after very briefly reviewing Ossorio's conception of behavior, uses his formulation to demonstrate why human behavior per se is neither explicable in terms of, nor reducible to, biological states of affairs, and thus why the claim from certain quarters that the science of psychology will be superseded by that of biology — that in the end it's "all really biological" — cannot be justified.

10:00 - 10:10

Break

10:10 - 11:10

**What Descriptive Psychology Is: A first-hand historical and substantive account.**

Anthony Putman, Ph.D

“What *is* Descriptive Psychology?” – a seemingly simple question that turns out to be extraordinarily complex and deeply frustrating. Drawing on first-hand experience as a Descriptive Psychologist since its inception in 1964, I will offer a guided tour of what Descriptive Psychology was and is, and how it has been and can be described. We will begin at the beginning with DP 1.0, as delineated in *Persons* by its founder Peter G. Ossorio, and move forward through versions leading up to the current DP 2015. Along the way we will see that answering that tricky question is not easy – but it is both doable and worth doing, when you drop the details and see what remains.

11:10 - 11:20 Break

11:20 - 12:20 ***Difficulties in Establishing a Working Definition of Social Justice***  
Matthew Cohen, M.S.W.

Abstract: This discussion will revolve around the two basic American concepts of Social Justice: one that focuses more on groups and is defined in terms of basic human rights; the other that emphasizes individuals and focuses on buying power in the market place. Using the two poles we would like to open up a discussion that can help us synthesize these two, figure out what is missing and establish a more precise working definition that can inform fields such as Social Work, Politics, Criminal Justice

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch  
(served in the AMC Conference Room)

### **FRIDAY, OCT 23, AFTERNOON SESSION**

Introductions by Walter Torres

1:30 - 2:30 ***Free Will, Persons, and Alief***  
Ryan Scherbart, PhD  
Humanities & Religious Studies Instructor  
Chabot College

Abstract: There appears to be substantial agreement among descriptive psychologists that a person is more than mere physiology. A person, they say, is something over and above a highly organized bio-chemical system of cells, tissues, organs, bones, fluids, neurons, synapses, neurotransmitters, etc. Persons are not 'meat machines'. Human *bodies* -- fine -- are just physical objects; however, this is not the case for *persons*. I will not so much argue that persons are merely physical beings but rather will suggest that those who claim otherwise face difficult, perennial questions about causal interaction between physical and nonphysical things and questions about free will. These queries are intended to promote fruitful discussion. I will provide an overview of how philosophers have generally grappled with these issues, including a presentation of my own work on free will and the concept of *alief*.

2:30 - 2:40

Break

2:40 - 3:40

***The Internet as a Medium of Community.***

Bryan Harnsberger, PsyD

This presentation will briefly investigate the use of social media platforms in communities and how it has evolved over the years to offer more opportunities to participate in the community practices a person is a part of. Using Putman's previous works on community and organization, the presentation will touch base on how social media can be effectively used to increase participation in the community, enhance communicating between members and offer means to further accredit existing members as leaders of the organization. The presentation will then shift to demonstrate some of the current social media platforms that are currently used in the Boston Descriptive Psychology Study Group as a means to offer new ways to connect with others interested in the works of Descriptive Psychology.

3:40 - 3:50

Break

3:50 - 4:50

***Significance and Aggression: A Reconceptualization of "Anger Management Training"***

Erol Zeybekoglu, MA

Court-ordered anger management clients usually have some precipitating incident of aggression in their history that is thought to have resulted from a loss of emotional and behavioral control; and yet many clients contend that their aggressive behavior was both deliberate and intentional. This course will help explain the social significance of anger, aggression, and hostility within a given community by utilizing a parametric analysis of intentional action to describe violent offenses. It will assess “status-dynamic” risk factors for recidivism of violent behavior, and discuss the clinical implications of re-conceptualizing anger management treatment by comparing theoretical approaches for anger management training.

5:00-7:00 Free time for dinner on your own and enjoying Golden.

### **FRIDAY, OCT 23, EVENING SESSION**

7:00-7:30 *And the Beat Goes On*  
Carolyn Zeiger, PhD

Abstract: This is an informal opportunity for conference participants to briefly share the ways they are using Descriptive Psychology, invite discussion or just give an update on their continuing work.

7:30 - 8:30 *Society Business Meeting*  
Moderated by Wynn Schwartz, PhD  
SDP President

The major topic, as introduced and moderated by Wynn Schwartz, President, SDP, will be discussion of strategies for fostering the survival of Descriptive Psychology and the Society for Descriptive Psychology

### **SATURDAY, OCT 24, MORNING SESSION**

Introductions by Laurie Bergner

8:15 - 9:00 Breakfast  
(served in the AMC Conference Room)

9:00 - 10:00 ***Descriptive Psychology, Personhood, and Neurocognitive Disorders - Lessons Learned, Next Steps***  
Aladdin Ossorio, PsyD

Lessons learned from describing personhood and neurocognitive disorders from a Descriptive Psychology lens will be briefly presented and followed-up with an examination of the concept of memory from neuropsychological, biomedical, and psychosocial perspectives. The implications to personhood from each perspective will be outlined. Descriptive Psychology will be used to organize the concept of memory across models and perspectives, and to begin linking various conceptualizations of memory with personhood, community, and social practices.

10:00 - 10:10 Break

10:10 - 12:10 ***Clinical Case Presentations***  
PsyD students from the University of Denver  
Graduate School of Professional Psychology  
Sponsored by Sonja Holt, PhD & Fernand Lubuguin, PhD

12:30 Lunch (on your own) and afternoon free for personal business, meetings, and recreation

### **SATURDAY, OCT 24, EVENING**

7:30 ***Society Banquet  
Announcements and Celebration***

### **SUNDAY, OCT 25, MORNING SESSION**

Introductions by Ned Kirsch

8:15 - 9:00 Breakfast  
(served in the AMC Conference Room)

9:00 - 10:00 ***The Social Practice of Satire: Power, Place, and Politics***



Charles Kantor, PhD and Jane Littmann, PhD

**Abstract:** The massacre last January of cartoonists in Paris sparked a debate about free speech vs. hateful speech, reminded us of the tradition in a free society of the right to criticize and offend, and warned us about boundaries between civil discourse and violent action. Satire as a form of expression has a long history of challenging power in diverse cultures. What does a Descriptive Psychology formulation of Humor and Satire add to our understanding of diverse reactions to expressions of humor, and the potential uses of humor and satire to challenge power, alter statuses, and change perspectives of their audience? A review of the DP formulation of Humor and Satire from Jane's dissertation, including the dynamics of Humor's power to accredit or degrade and spark reaction, will provide the springboard for a group discussion with the DP community of the above issues of politics, culture, discourse, and action.

10:00 - 10:10 Break

10:10 - 11:10 ***Conflict Resolution – Using Descriptive Psychology to Negotiate Relationship Change***  
Paula Holt, Esq., LLB

**Abstract:** Judicial resources across the United States have become burdened with litigation cases, most of which are often frivolous or emotionally driven and do not require lengthy and costly judicial proceedings. Common among judicial districts, therefore, is a mandate that any case submitted to the court must first go to some form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) before proceeding to trial. Additionally, today's business environment is a constantly moving target enmeshed with disputes resulting from differing viewpoints and complex status dynamics. The need for effective strategies for Alternative Dispute Resolution increasingly plays a role in every interaction from work to family. This presentation will deliver a comprehensive introduction to major dispute resolution topics, case studies, theories and issues in which conceptual tools and distinctions clarified in the literature and practice of Descriptive Psychology have proven to be of value in building essential negotiating skills. Specifically, an approach to ADR is constructed by borrowing concepts from the work of various

Descriptive Psychologists, for example, Roberts, Bergner, Sapin, Kelling, and Kirsch.

11:10 - 11:20 Break

11:20 - 12:20 ***Sense and Significance in the Human World***  
Mary K. Roberts, PhD

Abstract: Making a distinction between the Performance of a behavior and its Significance is essential for the scientific study of human behavior. The validity and value of the distinction is first demonstrated by a set of empirical studies, dealing with sex roles, intrinsic value, developmental disabilities, and alcoholism treatment. Then two methodological devices — parametric analysis and calculational system — are introduced. The use of the devices is illustrated, culminating in the presentation of a concept of Behavior in which both Performance and Significance have a place. The implications of the package as a whole for neuroscience are briefly discussed. (This is a shortened version of a presentation given in March, 2015 at the first International Convention of Psychological Science in Amsterdam.)

12:30 - 2:00 Lunch  
(served in the AMC Conference Room)

12:30 - 2:00 ***Board Meeting***  
(AMC Drumwright Board Room)

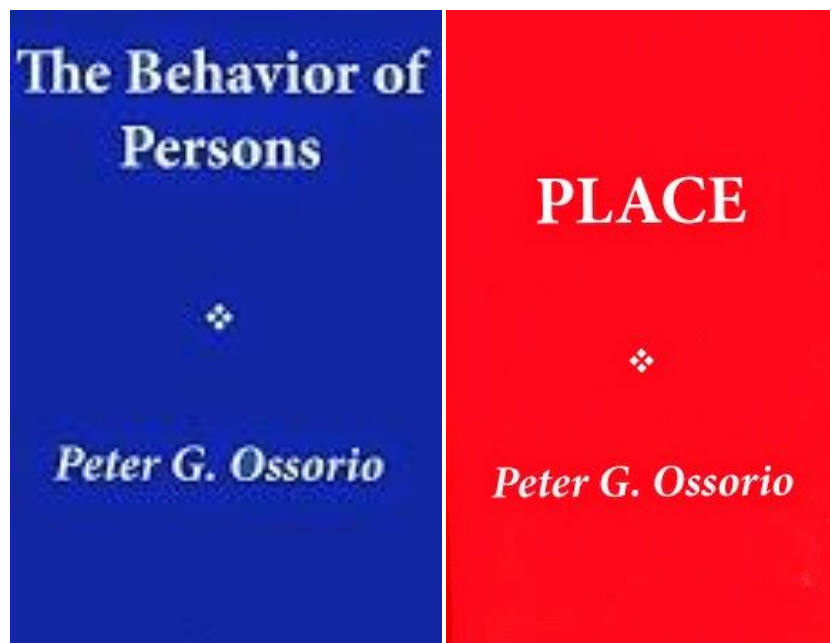
## **Further Information about the Society, Descriptive Psychology and Student Support**

Information on The Society for Descriptive Psychology can be found on the Society's website: <http://www.sdp.org>

Please consider supporting student presentations by donating to The Student's Fund. The Society for Descriptive Psychology is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible, but please consult with your tax advisor. A PayPal button that directs you to a donation site can also be found at: <http://www.sdp.org>

A brief orientation to Descriptive Psychology can be found in the postings, [People Make Sense: Foundations for a Human Science](#) and [A Short Course in Descriptive Psychology](#).

Peter Ossorio's masterwork, **The Behavior of Persons**, and his volume of status dynamic maxims, **Place**, are now available in paperback from the [Descriptive Psychology Press](#).



## **Information about Lodging**

Lodging is available at the [Golden Hotel](#) and the [Hampton Inn](#).  
Call the hotels directly to make reservations.

Conference Discounts are available at:

The **Hampton Inn** ([303-278-6600](tel:303-278-6600)) under "Society for Descriptive Psychology" \$109/night

The **Golden Hotel** by the deadline of 9/21/15 ([303-279-0100](tel:303-279-0100)) under "Society for Descriptive Psychology" \$162/night for a King Suite, or \$192/night for a Deluxe Double Queen Suite with a sleeper sofa, sleeps 3 people – a great option for students or anyone who wishes to share a room and save (equates to \$64 a person/night)

Other hotels in the area that have competitive rates:

**Denver West Marriot:** <http://www.marriott.com/reservation>

**Table Mountain Inn:** <http://www.tablemountaininn.com>