

6 P.M., *Mon.*, Nov. 13, 2017

Average
I.Q.

Learning
Disability

Mild

Moderate

Severe

Above average
I.Q.

Extreme ability in
some areas

Autism

- *Why the Humanities Need It*
- *Why It Needs the Humanities*

*A free, public lecture
by Doug Maynard
Professor of Sociology
UW-Madison*

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This "Humanities in Community" series continues monthly – 2nd Mondays – during Spring-Fall semesters. Updates at www.uproar21.us/lectures

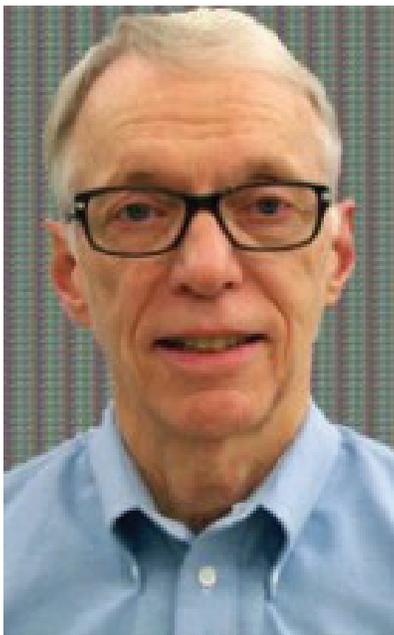
Doug Maynard

The Conway-Bascom Professor and Harold & Arlene Garfinkel Faculty Fellow in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Grants from the University of Wisconsin Graduate School, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Science Foundation have supported his research on the testing and diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



Why the Humanities Need Autism and Why Autism Needs the Humanities



“THE LAST 30 YEARS HAVE SEEN AN UPSURGE in prevalence of ASD from about **1 in 2500 in 1985 to 1 in 68 currently**, resulting in public awareness whereby ‘autism increasingly appears in the everyday life of American families’ (Liu, 2010) and ‘a person with autism is no longer an oddity’ (Grinker, 2007). As familiar as ASD may currently be, the fact remains that characteristics displayed by an individual with ASD can be highly disruptive to our everyday routines and social worlds.

“**ASD needs the humanities** because its traditions can help us see ASD-type behaviors not just as ‘impairments’ or ‘deficits’ (per our Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals), but also as *confounding and subverting commonsense rules, roles, and expectations*.

“Reciprocally, the **humanities need ASD** because those who manifest the syndrome can *play a role similar to that of the arts by providing experiences of ‘enstrangement’ or ‘defamiliarization’* (ala Viktor Shklovsky) so that we become more aware of self, others, and the parameters of social worlds in which we live.

“Put differently, as Amit Pinchevski remarks, autism exposes the ‘epistemological boundary’ between effective communication and its breakdown. Crucially, such interruption also means opportunity for exploring the other side of ordinary communication, whereby we can enhance the notion of ‘difference’ rather than ‘impairment’ or ‘deficit.’”

“Drawing on autistic autobiography, ethnography, and my research on the testing and diagnosis of ASD, I explore these matters through talk, video, and discussion.”