

Princeton University

HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVING EMERITUS STATUS



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The biographical sketches were written by staff and colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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RONALD J. COMER



Ronald Comer, lecturer on continuing appointment in psychology, transferred to emeritus status in February after more than 40 years of dedicated teaching and advising at Princeton University. Ron has been a devoted and inspired teacher and mentor to countless Princeton undergrads with career aspirations in social and clinical psychology. Through his textbooks and educational videos, Ron has distinguished himself as a top-notch educator of young psychologists both at Princeton and indeed throughout the world.

Ron received his undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1969 and his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Clark University in 1975. Ron joined the Princeton faculty in 1975 as an assistant professor and then transitioned to a lecturer with continuing appointment. His course on abnormal psychology, which he taught for many years at Princeton, was immensely popular. Ron also taught popular courses on developmental psychopathology and controversies in clinical psychology. Ron was the recipient of the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1993. His dry wit, true compassion for students, and dedication to the subject matter made him a favorite teacher throughout his time at Princeton.

In addition to teaching theory in the classroom, Ron spearheaded and led a successful effort to develop a clinical psychology program for undergraduates at Princeton, which grew substantially over the years. To meet this interest, Ron organized a cadre of lecturers to expand the department's course offerings so that students would have exposure to various aspects of clinical psychology. In addition, Ron took on the role of providing opportunities for students to engage in independent research with clinical relevance, arranging for student projects at Eden Autism and other mental health facilities. Through his teaching, the undergraduate program in clinical psychology studies, and his role as the University mental health professions adviser, Ron had a positive impact on the careers and lives of countless Princeton psychology concentrators.

Ron also wrote several textbooks, including the highly popular *Abnormal Psychology* (Worth Publishers), now in its ninth edition and translated into several other languages, as well as *Fundamentals in Abnormal Psychology* (Worth Publishers, 2005) and *Psychology Around Us* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011, with Elizabeth Gould), an introductory psychology textbook. Ron's textbooks were so effective because he made the material accessible to multiple levels of students without losing any of the evidence-based rigor that is so important in providing a scientific grounding to students of clinical psychology specifically and psychology itself more generally. Ron enhanced his textbooks with a compendium of educational videos that brought many of the psychological phenomena he was describing to life. These videos were critically acclaimed and brought undergraduate education in abnormal psychology into the twenty-first century.

Ron has also been an excellent departmental and University citizen, serving as undergraduate departmental representative and a member of the psychology department's curriculum committee. In addition, Ron was a member of the institutional review board (IRB), the University oversight board of human research participant studies, and ultimately assumed the role as IRB chair in his last two years on the regular faculty at Princeton. Under Ron's leadership of this committee, the IRB became highly efficient while maintaining its rigorous approach, a further testament to Ron's dedication and good judgment.