



## Western Psychology Colloquia 2016-2017

January 15, 2016, at 3:00pm, UCC, Room 146



**Dr. SHELDON SOLOMON**

Skidmore College

### ***The Worm at the Core on the role of death in life***

#### **Abstract**

**Terror management theory** posits that the juxtaposition of an inclination toward self-preservation with the highly developed intellectual abilities that make humans aware of their vulnerabilities and inevitable death creates the potential for paralyzing terror. One of the most important functions of cultural worldviews is to manage the terror associated with the awareness of death. This is accomplished primarily through the cultural mechanism of self-esteem, which consists of the belief that one is a valuable contributor to a meaningful universe. Because of the protection from the potential for terror that these psychological structures provide, people are motivated to maintain faith in their cultural worldviews and satisfy the standards of value associated with their worldviews. Dr. Solomon will present an overview of his research program assessing the empirical merits of these claims, and then briefly consider the implications of terror management theory for individual and social behavior.