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Abram Amsel Papers

COLLECTION DATES: 1944-1998

VOLUME: 27 linear feet [M3424-M3482]

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PREPARED BY: Tim Rogers, February 2007

Biographical Note

Abram Amsel was born in Montreal Canada, December 4th, 1922. Amsel received his bachelor of arts degree from Queens University in 1944, masters degree from McGill University in 1946, and his doctorate from the University of Iowa in 1948. After graduating, Amsel worked as Assistant professor at Tulane University from 1948-1960, professor at the University of Toronto from 1960-1969, and the University of Texas at Austin from 1969 until he retired in 1999 as Professor Emeritus.

Amsel is best known as a learning theorist and his development and systematic study of frustration theory. Over the course of his academic career he published numerous works, three of which are considered citation classics in the area of learning. His work on frustration is summarized in his book *Frustration Theory: An Analysis of Dispositional Learning and Memory*. Amsel was also active in numerous professional organizations in various capacities including committee work and governing boards, editor and consulting editor, and reviewer of federal grants for the National Science Academy. He was recognized as a fellow in the American Psychological Society, American Association for Advancement of Science, American Psychological Association, and International Society for Developmental Psychobiology. In addition, Amsel was the recipient of the prestigious Howard Crosby Warren Medal for outstanding research in Psychology in 1980, and appointed to the National Academy of Sciences in 1992.

Scope and Content

The Abram Amsel papers are organized into the following record series:

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|----|--------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1. | Biographical Information | 5. | Research/Grants |
| 2. | Correspondence | 6. | Reviews |
| 3. | Research | 7. | Professional Affiliations |
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The papers of Abram Amsel contain his extensive research on learning, memory, and developmental psychobiology from the late 1940s to late 1990s. A unique aspect of this collection is the possession of draft revisions and editorial feedback for several of the manuscripts, as well as unpublished works authored by Amsel. Information related to the manuscripts is presented in chronological order, often with a copy of a reprint at the front of the folder and the rough or first draft at the back. In addition to these research materials, this collection contains notes, reviews of his work, syllabi of courses, and presentations given by Amsel throughout his career. This collection also documents Amsel's involvement with professional affiliations such as the American Psychological Association and others as a consultant, member, editor, officer, and acknowledged scholar.

Series Description

1. Biography

This series contains information related autobiographical information from his curriculum vitae, awards, family history, and personal reflections on his career.

2. Correspondence

This series contains correspondence related to a variety of professional communications stemming from 1948 to 2000. Also of note is the correspondence between Kenneth Spence and Clark Hull from 1933 to 1952. All the correspondence is arranged chronologically by year.

3. Research

Included in this series are several of Amsel's published manuscripts, articles, monographs, as well as unpublished works and some student papers. The manuscripts are arranged in chronological order by year. Folders containing manuscripts often start with a copy of the reprinted publication and previous drafts before acceptance.

4. Presentations

This series contains various presentations given by Amsel throughout his career as an eminent scholar in the area of learning, memory, and neuropsychobiology from 1950 to 1998. The contents of this series are arranged in chronological order by year.

5. Research/Grants

This series comprises grant applications, research notes, as well as grants Amsel reviewed during the course of his academic career. The grant applications and

reviews are arranged in chronological order by year whereas the research notes are organized by topic.

6. Reviews

This series contains restricted material comprising Amsel's editorial work for several different journals (i.e. reviewing submissions for publications). These materials are restricted.

7. Professional Affiliations

This series contains information related to Amsel's participation in several different professional organizations. Materials are arranged by name of organization and contain such items as correspondence and notes from various committee meetings and conferences.

8. Academic Materials

Included in this series are materials related to Amsel's career as a student and professor of psychology. The series contains materials such as lecture notes, curriculum for classes, as well as Amsel's notes as a student.

9. Theses/Dissertations

This series contains various dissertations and theses that Amsel worked on as chair/advisor or as a committee member. It also contains Amsel's thesis and dissertation.

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