

# LIFE@ELON

2015 Spring Schedule – Wednesday Class  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## **February 18** **Life in China Today** **Ed and Carolyn Christmas**

Ed and Carolyn Christmas' unusual adventure started in the 1990's when they made several Chinese friends during Ed's three-year business assignment in Singapore, a country where the majority population is Chinese. Our members will hear how that experience developed into an annual schedule of close to four months in China, the rest in North Carolina, and presumably lots of jet lag in between. This will be a fascinating perspective, from an Alamance County couple, about day to day life on the other side of the world.

When Ed retired in 2002, they began their China experience by working with a Christian Missions organization. With Carolyn's retirement later, they increased their time there and developed independent relationships. Since 2011, they have spent up to four months in China, divided into two trips, allowing Ed to handle a job of teaching English in a school in the city of Sihong. Carolyn also has been involved in teaching, but now primarily maintains a household and stays involved in community life.

*Ed Christmas is a native of Camden, SC. He received his BS in Physics from Furman University and, except for two years in the US Army, spent his work career with the DuPont Corporation. Carolyn is a Waynesboro, VA Native who attended James Madison University and graduated from VCU in Richmond. Her professional career was in Interior Design and she operated her own business in Burlington for more than 20 years. They live in Graham and are members of First Baptist Church in Burlington.*

## **February 25** **Famous Visitors to Alamance County - The rich, the famous . . . and some who just slipped in!** **Don Bolden, Editor Emeritus, Times-News**

There have been explorers, military leaders, presidents, famous athletes, entertainment celebrities, and some people who you may have never heard of, but who were famous at least in their own minds, who have visited Alamance County over the last three hundred years. As we hear the stories and see the pictures, there will be many connections made to local history. Expect lots of surprises as Don shares his own personal connections in this fun way of learning about local history.

*Don is a native of Burlington, a graduate of Burlington High School and the University of North Carolina, School of Journalism. He spent fifty one years with the Times-News in a career that carried him from the Oval Office in the White House to behind the Iron Curtain into the Soviet Union during the Cold War. He served the newspaper as editor for eighteen years, a period in which it was judged best in its class among North Carolina newspapers. He was a founding member of the Board of Advisors of the School of Communications at Elon University and served as chair of that group for eight years. Awards he has received include the R. C. Hoiles Award, the highest award given by Freedom Communications of which the Times-News was a part, and the Elon Medallion, the highest honor given by Elon University. He and his wife Billie Faye have been married fifty seven years.*

## **March 4** **Blackbeard the Pirate and Queen Anne's Revenge:** **The History of the Notorious Pirate Captain and His Flagship** **David D. Moore**

Colonial-era letters, reports, and even trial records are primary sources that reveal much of the known history of Blackbeard the pirate. The first half of this presentation will cover these fascinating documents; the second part will review the results of 18 years of archaeological effort at the *Queen Anne's Revenge* shipwreck site.

*Curator of Nautical Archaeology at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, David D. Moore has been involved in maritime history and shipwreck research for more than 30 years. He received a B.A. in marine science from UNC-Wilmington and completed course work for a master's in maritime history and nautical archaeology at East Carolina University. He began researching piracy and proposed a project to locate Blackbeard's shipwrecks as a graduate student at ECU. Mr. Moore worked in Florida as an archaeological consultant, performing structural investigations of the 17th century Spanish galleons Nuestra Señora de Atocha (c. 1622), Santa Margarita (c. 1622), and San Martin (c. 1618). He directed the first deep-water shipwreck excavation utilizing robotic technology off the Dry Tortugas on the wreck of the Spanish vessel Nuestra Señora del Rosario y Buen Jesus (c. 1622). As principal investigator on the Henrietta Marie project (National Geographic Magazine, August 2002), his work led to the completion of his master's thesis at ECU in 1989 on the historical and archaeological investigations of this significant slave ship site. Mr. Moore returned to North Carolina in 1996 to join the N.C. Maritime Museum staff. Since 1997, he has directed recording efforts on the excavation of Blackbeard's flagship *Queen Anne's Revenge* (National Geographic Magazine, July 2006).*

### **March 11 Elon Honor Students Present Their Research**

The undergraduates in the Honors Program at Elon University are a cohort of exceptional students, from all majors, that participate in the best features of an Elon education: challenging courses with strong faculty mentors, exciting research opportunities, exposure to international perspectives through global study, and a community of faculty and student inquirers who want to be fully engaged in a rewarding academic experience.

Throughout the four-year sequence, these students learn how to conduct sophisticated academic research in preparation for the highlight of their program - a project of professional quality that culminates in a published volume in Elon's Belk Library. We welcome three seniors from this program to share their research. The class schedule of the three chosen students will determine the order they speak, but all the presentations are guaranteed to be compelling, so mark your calendar to hear these amazing students!

### **March 18 Education in a Flat World Joan Barnatt**

Each fall during Elon's Family Weekend, several outstanding faculty members teach a class to visiting parents to give them a sense of what classes are like for their students. Dr. Barnatt will join us to share this experience with you. This mini-course explores our public education landscape in light of growing national diversity, mobility, and global competition. Through a structured reading/response format the participants will consider questions as: How does the 21st century landscape impose new demands on K-12 public education? Where does the US education system really stand as compared to other nations? What assumptions are built into education policy and practice? How can we prepare teachers to negotiate a changing world in education? You are invited to join in the discussion as a means of better understanding where K-12 public education is and the challenges we face.

*Joan Barnatt is an assistant professor in the School of Education, where she is the Co-director of the Master's of Education Program and Program Coordinator for Middle Grades Education for undergraduates. Before coming to Elon six years ago, she had a varied career in education teaching in teacher preparation, teaching and administrative duties in upper elementary and middle grades; as well as working as a curriculum developer and educational consultant. She completed her doctoral studies at Boston College with a concentration in Curriculum, Policy and Reform, providing a basis for today's presentation. Her current research agenda includes publications in teacher preparation, issues of social justice in education, global studies, and literacy.*

**March 25**

**“The Idea of America: How Values Shaped Our Republic and Hold the Key to Our Future”**

**Bill White**

At the heart of America is a great debate. At the heart of that debate are our shared values: law and ethics, freedom and equality, diversity and unity, common wealth and private wealth. Bill White describes these values and demonstrates how the tensions between them have shaped and continue to shape our history.

*Dr. William E. White holds a Ph.D. in American studies from the College of William and Mary. He co-authored The Idea of America: How Values Shaped Our Republic and Hold the Key to Our Future. He serves as the Royce R. and Kathryn M. Baker Vice President of Productions, Publications, and Learning Ventures for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, leading the organization’s educational media outreach programs to inform and expand citizenship education. Colonial Williamsburg is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to teaching American history and citizenship, the operation and preservation of the restored 18th-century Revolutionary capital of Virginia, and telling the inspirational stories of our nation’s founding men and women.*

**April 1**

***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind***

**Jeffrey Coker**

The Elon University Common Reading Committee for 2014–2015 chose *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* as their selection. It is the compelling story of William Kamkwamba's experience as a young man in Malawi. After experiencing famine and being forced to drop out of school, William used a library book and junk parts to construct a windmill that would provide electricity to his home and hope to his village. This session will invite discussion on diversity, global engagement, entrepreneurship, sustainable food systems, alternative energies, personal development, writing, and other topics found in the book. William came to visit Elon’s campus last September and made quite an impression. If you have read the book, that is great but if you haven’t please don’t let that stop you from coming, you will be glad you did!

*Jeffrey Coker leads the Elon Core Curriculum, the set of courses and experiences that are shared by every undergraduate. During his term as Director, the Core Curriculum has undergone many improvements. Coker was also instrumental in the founding of Elon University Forest (established by the Trustees on Oct. 22, 2010), a campus preserve for teaching and research, and served as the first chair of its management committee. He has published and presented widely on higher education topics such as experiential learning, civic engagement, new pedagogies for introductory courses, and other high-impact educational practices. His biological research is similarly broad, ranging from plant ecology to genetics.*

**April 8**

**Changing the Climate: Healing, Humanity & Hope for a Heated Planet**

**Robert Musil**

Our complex world is examined from many angles including: Global warming; how Americans can find hope; why students are ready now to lead us; the new environmentalism: beyond polar bears and penguins. How Washington really works and how to effect change; opposition to the Iraq war: how the media missed the story. Ending America's dangerous dependence on oil; campus sustainability and how to get there; green business, green investing. Can science and faith find the same wavelength?

*Robert K. Musil, Ph.D., MPH, is Scholar in Residence and Adjunct Professor in the School of International Studies at American University where he teaches in the Nuclear Studies Institute and the Program on Global Environmental Politics. Dr. Musil was Executive Director and CEO of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and its Director of Policy and Programs from 1992-2006. He is a graduate of Yale and Northwestern Universities and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and has been a Visiting Honorary Fellow at the London School of*

*Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and of Pembroke College, Cambridge University. Currently, he is a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Visiting Fellow.*

**April 15**

**India and the United States: An Emerging Friendship**

**Brian Pennington**

Dr. Pennington's talk will unpack current events in India, especially as they relate to the United States. President Barack Obama's state visit to India in late January 2015 brought new visibility to the world's largest democracy and produced several new important agreements between India and the United States. India's new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is immensely popular in India and his friendship with Obama has now captured the world's attention, but his checkered political past and treatment of religious minorities in India had prompted the US to deny him a visa until 2014. What does the average American need to know to understand this new relationship between India and the US? How can the US balance its own strategic interests while remaining a voice for religious freedom? This engaging and informative session will leave you better able to understand the news about the relationship between two of the world's most important democratic societies.

*Brian Pennington is the Director of Elon's Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society. He is the author of Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion and the editor of Teaching Religion and Violence, both published by Oxford University Press. Currently he is completing a collection of essays that will appear in the book, Ritual Innovation in South Asian Religions that he is co-editing with Amy Allocco of Elon's Religious Studies department. His study of religious change in the Indian Himalayas, entitled God's Fifth Abode: Entrepreneurial Hinduism in the Hindu Himalayas, is built on over a decade of research in North India. He regularly teaches a Winter Term course in South India, most recently in January of this year.*

**April 22**

**Looking Straight Ahead: The story of a shy fifteen year old girl, in the storm of racial change in 1957**

**Dorothy Counts-Scoggins**

Dorothy Counts was caught up in the storms of racial change in 1957 because her African-American parents wanted her to have the best available high school education – and that opportunity was an all-white school just a mile from their home. Her arrival at the school marked the first day of racial integration in Charlotte's public schools and it was a hateful day in which she had to withstand a barrage of abuse – abuse that continued inside and outside the school until her parents had to withdraw her for the safety of the entire family. Dorothy Counts-Scoggins comes to LIFE@Elon fifty eight years after that historic day, offering her memories of a painful time, a story of changed hearts and forgiveness, and her thoughts on challenges still to be faced in dealing with racial differences today.

*Dorothy Counts-Scoggins has dedicated her life to enriching the lives of others and to organizations working to offer opportunity for all children to live in a just and diverse world. That commitment grew out of her own painful experience at the age of fifteen as one of the first four African-Americans attempting to integrate Charlotte's public schools in 1957. Facing ongoing abuse and harassment, Dorothy withdrew, graduated from a Private High School, and then from her hometown's Johnson C. Smith University. She later received Certification in Early Childhood Leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This path led Dorothy to a busy and effective career as a social worker for abused and neglected children, a preschool teacher, a Community College instructor, and as an innovative administrator. Dorothy has received many tributes for her courage and for her contributions to her community. One of the most symbolic is that fifty years after that sad time in Charlotte's Harding High School, the local School Board awarded Dorothy an honorary diploma and re-named the school's library in her honor.*

**April 29**  
**Space Weather and Why You Should Care**  
**Hugh Comfort**

We will examine how space weather is similar to Earth weather and how it is different. We will particularly examine the physical differences in the Earth and space environments which cause these differences in their 'weathers'. Space weather is affected by processes that vary on spatial scales ranging from the very small (atomic scale) to the very large (solar system) and on time scales ranging from days to decades; and we will explore these in broad terms. Following some initial discussion of terminology, we will present an overview of the 'big picture' to provide a framework for the remainder of the discussions. News accounts of space weather events frequently use terminology that is not commonly encountered, so we will define and illustrate these terms to make them generally accessible. A few recent large space weather events will be noted. The classes will be very interactive, with lots of opportunity for questions.

*Dr. Hugh Comfort is Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) where he was on the physics faculty for 27 years, teaching and researching in space physics. He received his degrees in physics from Harvard (AB) and UAH (MS and PhD). While in Huntsville, he served in the Army at Redstone Arsenal, worked in the aerospace industry and was a post-doc at NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center, prior to joining UAH. During his latter years on the UAH faculty, he also directed the Center for Science Education which piloted the Alabama Mathematics, Science and Technology Initiative for improving the teaching of science and math in K-12 schools statewide.*

**May 6**  
**Bob Knox, the Executive Chairman, will hold the LIFE@Elon annual business meeting**  
followed by  
**All You Ever Wanted to Know About Steam Engines**  
**Albert H. Spinks**

Steam engines of the late 1800's to early 1900's will be described. Included will be some of the large engines developed and constructed between 1941 and 1945, especially the "Big Boy", claimed to be the largest of the large, 8 of which still exist on display. An introduction will be given on how a steam engine works and some of its major parts will be described. A Lima-Shay locomotive, designed to operate in a timber environment, will also be discussed. It was seeing this type of engine back in 1938, at his grandfather's lumber mill in southern Mississippi, that began Al's lifelong fascination with steam engines. This talk promises not to be too technical, but packed full of good information everyone should know to appreciate these machines.

*Albert H. Spinks grew up on a farm in Bolivar County, Mississippi. He earned two Bachelor's degrees from Mississippi State (Agriculture and then Electrical Engineering) and an MS in Electrical Engineering from NC State. His post-college career included two years in the US Army (Anti-Aircraft; Ft. Bliss, Texas) and several years as a self-employed farmer. In 1961, he began a 28-year career as an engineer for Bell Systems in North Carolina and New Jersey. Al is now retired and lives in Burlington. He is an honorary Member and former Secretary of Burlington Rotary Club. His hobbies include traveling and genealogy.*

**Lunch for our Wednesday class members will take place after our class.**

*As we get closer to the end of the semester, more details will be available and responses for the lunch will be taken.*

*\*Please note, presenters and topics for the weekly classes are subject to change.\**

## **Book Club**

### ***Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali**

Wednesday, March 4 1:00 – 2:30 Johnston Hall, Rudd Room  
Thursday, March 5 10:30 – noon Johnston Hall, Snyder Room

### ***A History of the World in Six Glasses* by Tom Standage**

Wednesday, April 29 1:00 – 2:30 Johnston Hall, Rudd Room  
Thursday, April 30 10:30 – noon Johnston Hall, Snyder Room

### ***From the Voices of Discovery Speaker Series:***

#### **Spring Convocation**

**Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Alumni Gym**

**Neil DeGrasse Tyson, Ph.D.** Astrophysicist and Frederick P. Rose Director, Hayden Planetarium,  
Research Associate, Department of Astrophysics, American Museum of Natural History

The partnership of FOX Broadcasting Company and the National Geographic Channel in producing the popular hit series “Cosmos: A Space-Time Odyssey” is a clear indication that science is slowly becoming more mainstream — and more cool. Of course, it helps to have a science rock star like Neil DeGrasse Tyson as the series host. Tyson was captured by astronomy at about age 9 while spending time stargazing from the rooftop of his Bronx home, especially after a visit with his parents to the Hayden Planetarium in New York City. “The stars came out, and I was hooked. How could you not be?” he says. Tyson’s curiosity and passion to learn about the workings of the universe led to earning a bachelor’s degree in physics from Harvard University and a doctorate in astrophysics from Columbia University. He then became the director of the Hayden Planetarium, the very same special place that helped to kindle his passion for astronomy and science. As an astrophysicist, Tyson’s research interests include star formation and the structure of the Milky Way galaxy. He has authored 10 books, including *Death By Black Hole* and *Other Cosmic Quandaries*, and has written many articles. He has been the recipient of numerous recognitions and awards, such as the NASA Distinguished Public Service Medal and two presidential appointments related to determining national policy about aerospace industry and exploration. Tyson is best known for promoting excitement about astronomy and science among non-scientists. Through his many popular writings, the hosting of televised science documentaries and providing significant interviews about science, Tyson has told the great stories that engage, enlighten and inspire curiosity about the grandeur and workings of the universe. He is considered a modern day ambassador on a mission to “transform how we think about science.”

Tickets are free to Elon Society donors and general admission price is \$13.00.

LIFE@Elon members will be able to purchase a discounted convocation ticket for \$10.00, but only one each.

Please see Kathryn at class, call 278-7431, or email her at [kbennett9@elon.edu](mailto:kbennett9@elon.edu) to purchase a ticket.