



Spring 2023 - Thursday Schedule
Zoom Class: 10:00-12:00

Zoom Class Format

Zoom connection

On Wednesday afternoon, an email will be sent with a link for the Thursday morning class. If the presenter has a handout, it will be attached to the email. Fifteen minutes before the start of class (9:45 a.m.) on Thursday the meeting will be open so you can click on the link to join. A class volunteer or a student worker, will be there to greet members as they are logging on. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom or need a refresher, material will be available to assist you before the first class.

Announcements and Introduction

At 10:00 a.m., the class will begin with updates and announcements about LIFE@Elon. Then a volunteer member of the class will introduce the speaker.

Presentation

To minimize distractions during the presentation, all participants will have their cameras turned off and voices muted.

Virtual break

About halfway through the class there will be a ten-minute break. A virtual timer will play on the screen while you stretch your legs, get more coffee or water, or go to the restroom. When the timer sounds, be ready to watch the rest of the presentation.

Questions

Questions for the presenter can be entered into the chat box at any time. When the presenter is finished, there will be additional questions and discussion. At that time, you may turn your video on and unmute yourself to ask a question directly or make a comment.

February 16

A Very British Problem: Brexit 1945-2021

Andrew O'Brien, MA

Since the end of the Second World War, Britain has struggled with this question: Is Britain European? One response is that Britain can only thrive if it is more European; for others, England can only succeed if it is less European. This question was complicated by Britain's relationship with its former empire, especially its preferential trading links. Under Margaret Thatcher's determined leadership, Europe would create its greatest achievement, the single market. Yet, that same market would create the framework for a wave of eastern European immigrants into the UK. All these factors would come into play during the 2016 referendum. In this class, we will explore the path to Brexit and what this means for the future of Britain and Europe.

Born in England, Andrew O'Brien graduated with a bachelor's and master's degree in History from Oxford University. In addition, he holds a teaching degree from London University and a master's degree in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University. After teaching in England, he taught middle school for 21 years in Maryland. Recently retired, Mr. O'Brien and his wife live in North Carolina and St. Petersburg,

Florida. Andrew currently teaches courses in person and through zoom to senior living communities and through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Eckerd College and the Learning is ForEver Program based at the University of Wisconsin.

February 23

The Modern History of Ukraine

Jeff Jones, PhD

The tragedy of Ukraine is in the news every day. This timely class will focus on Ukraine and Russia with emphasis on current events.

Dr. Jeff Jones was born in the North Carolina mountains in Jefferson and grew up near Greensboro, in Liberty. He did his undergraduate and graduate work at UNC-Chapel Hill and is currently an Associate Professor of Russian-Soviet and Contemporary World History at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His first book is entitled Everyday Life and the 'Reconstruction' of Soviet Russia During and After the Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948, and he is currently completing a book entitled Smoke, Mirrors and Memories: Legacies of the Soviet-Afghan War, 1979-1989, forthcoming in 2024. Dr. Jones traveled through Ukraine frequently in the 1990s and lived there in the summer of 2015 while doing research in Kyiv.

March 2

How Diversity Can Heal Racial Division

Paul Herron, PhD

Dr. Herron grew up as a sharecropper in racially segregated Mississippi. When he was eight years old, he read and heard about the torture and murder of another Black boy, fourteen-year-old Emmitt Till, by two white men on another plantation. When he was nineteen, he moved to a diverse and inclusive community in Michigan and flourished, earning a PhD from Michigan State University and becoming a neuroscientist. Dr. Herron will discuss how the torture and murder of Emmitt Till and the culture that permitted it damaged his brain, genes, and behavior whereas living in a culture of diversity and inclusion stimulated his brain and made him smarter.

Dr. Paul Herron earned a BS in Chemistry, an MS in Psychology, and a PhD in Psychology and Neuroscience from Michigan State University. He did postdoctoral studies at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, and at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. He started his academic career at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and retired from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis as a professor. Dr. Herron has conducted neuroscience research on the diversity of mammalian brains, learning, and memory.

March 9

An Introduction to Socrates

Stephen Bloch-Schulman, PhD

Socrates' influence on Western philosophy is impossible to overestimate. In this presentation Stephen Bloch-Schulman will lead a discussion and examination of who Socrates was and what his work as a philosopher means. This will also raise essential questions about the relationship between ethics, knowledge, and power.

Dr. Stephen Bloch-Schulman is professor and chair of Philosophy at Elon. The recipient of the Daniels-Danieley Award for Excellence in Teaching at Elon in 2018, he has taught the Ancient Philosophy upper-level class at Elon more than a dozen times. He was also the inaugural winner of the Prize for Excellence in Teaching Philosophy, sponsored by the American Philosophical Association, the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, and the Teaching Philosophy Association. Dr. Bloch-Schulman has twice won the Lenssen Prize, granted for the best article about teaching philosophy over the two-year period prior to the award. His and Elon University colleague Dr. Anthony Weston's recent book, Thinking Through Questions, is an exploration of the meaning of questions, how to categorize them, and how to get to better questions (and reject those that are problematic).

March 16

Nobody Lives Alone: Symbiotic Partners, Friends or Foes?

Parke Rublee, PhD

All organisms interact with "partners" during their lifetime. Such relationships may be harmful, but they are just as often helpful, allowing both organisms to prosper. This offering will examine a range of associations, including that of humans with our microbiome, which we are discovering is intimately linked to our physical and mental health.

Dr. Parke Rublee, an aquatic ecologist, received his MS and PhD from North Carolina State University. After postdoctoral positions at the University of Miami and the Smithsonian Institution, he taught at Whitman College for eight years and then at UNCG for twenty-eight years. In 1997 he was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He now lives in Greensboro and spends summers in Maine.

March 23

Black Classical Pianists and Composers

Eden Esters Brown, MM

Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt. All common household names of classical music and some of the greatest composers of piano literature. The classical piano tradition has a rich and deep history, stemming from Western European culture and evolving through contemporary pianists and composers all over the world. However, a lineage of composers and pianists rooted in a different cultural tradition has gone largely unnoticed and underappreciated — composers of the African diaspora. In this presentation, Eden Esters Brown will explore the lives and music of prominent African American composers and pianists of the 20th century and beyond. These hidden figures were pioneers in establishing and advancing the position of Black Americans in the classical tradition, recounting the African American experience, and preserving Black history through the gift of music.

Eden Esters Brown '07 is a pianist and Instructor of Music at Elon University. Raised in New Jersey, she received classical and jazz training from the late, Mr. Morris Nanton, a nationally renowned jazz artist and Julliard graduate. She holds a B.A. in Piano Performance from Elon University, and a Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Louisiana State University. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Music Education with piano pedagogy emphasis at LSU.

At Elon, Eden teaches a variety of music courses including piano, music theory, African American Composers, and Music in the Village, a service-learning course that provides music lessons to students in

the Alamance-Burlington School System. Eden's research interests include increasing access to music education for underserved populations through advocating for revisions to educational legislation and implementing a diverse and culturally competent curriculum.

March 30

How a Google Data Center Works

Andrew (Drew) C. Walton, MS

This presentation will cover how Google data centers work, connecting the user to information all over the world at lightning speed. It will also discuss how YouTube designed custom hardware to process videos uploaded to it.

Drew Walton is a distinguished computer engineer with a track record of solving difficult technical problems requiring strong leadership and collaboration across the computer industry. He has a broad background in computer architecture, embedded software, parallel processing, server design, software engineering, and automated fault-management solutions.

Mr. Walton grew up in Burlington. He graduated with a BS in electrical engineering from the United States Air Force Academy and received an MS in software engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology. After serving as a captain in the Air Force, he worked for Hewlett-Packard for almost twenty years. He became one of approximately 300 Distinguished Technologists out of 300,000 employees for his technical contributions that impacted HP's bottom line, leadership across business units, and breadth of knowledge. While at HP, either he or his team received 31 patents.

Mr. Walton left HP in 2016 to work for Google. As a technical program manager, he led projects in Google's Platforms team, working on server, accelerator, and storage projects for Google data centers, developing hardware for YouTube so that the video is instantly ready for any viewing platform (cell phones or movie screens). He is now a software engineer having founded Google's fault management team, which uses hardware failure data to drive improvements in the design of computer chips and ensures that software does the right thing when it detects a failure. Drew works with computer chip manufacturers across the industry and with the Open Compute Foundation to ensure computers handle failures gracefully.

April 6

Scotland's Emigrants in North Carolina

Mara Shea

[Rescheduled from the fall of 2022 due to illness.]

This presentation will briefly cover the eighteenth-century emigrations from Scotland to America, focusing on a North Carolina connection and highlighting some of the music and dance traditions that came with the settlers. Mara will educate and entertain as she weaves her beautiful fiddle playing into the history lessons she shares.

Mara Shea has been a dance fiddler for almost thirty years, performing Scottish, Contra, and English country dance. She is also a teacher; her fiddle students range from seven to eighty-seven, most between fifty and seventy-five. She studied classical violin for the first part of her life until she was twenty, when

she abandoned the violin entirely, picking it up again fifteen years later to become a dance fiddle player. She studied ethnomusicology and folklore in Scotland for a year at the University of Aberdeen, and she loves to write and do research about tune histories. She has lived in North Carolina for thirty years and now lives at Twin Lakes in Elon, North Carolina. She travels throughout the US and UK, playing for dance events and teaching workshops.

April 13

The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection

Lauren Maupin, Manager of Education and Programs

The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection located at the University of Virginia is the only public museum devoted entirely to Australian aboriginal art in America. Comprising over 1600 objects including paintings on bark, canvas, board and paper, the collection possesses a wide range of Aboriginal art. This presentation will provide an opportunity for participants to learn about Aboriginal art, the history of the Papunya Tula artists, and the ongoing efforts to support and maintain the collection. In addition to discussing about the history of the collection, the presentation will have a variety of slides of the works.

Lauren Maupin holds a BA in Art History from Messiah University and an MA in the History of Art from University College, London, as well as a certificate in Executive Leadership from Cornell University. Her primary role as Manager of Education and Programs involves the development, implementation, and evaluation of in-person and digital engagement for Kluge-Ruhe, which includes the artist residency program, Kluge-Ruhe's volunteer and tour programs, visitor services, and community programming, as well as webinars and large-scale online resources. She is a co-author of Teaching Aboriginal Art in the Classroom, a publication of the Art Gallery of South Australia, and regularly advises other museums and schools about their lesson plans on Aboriginal art. She is passionate about making information about indigenous Australian arts accessible to the casual explorer anywhere in the world, and luring visitors into the wonder and beauty of indigenous Australian cultures.

April 20

Undergraduate Research Presentations

Various Elon Students

Join us for a riveting exploration of new scholarship from Elon's brightest young minds. Undergraduate Research is one of five learning requirements promoted by the University. Research offers a unique opportunity for students to engage in inquiry in their chosen field of study and to experience first-hand what professionals in a chosen field do. The research presentations of these students will encourage you to think about the world in ways you had not before.

At each LIFE@Elon session, three Elon students will present their research from various fields across the University. Each class will feature different student presentations, as class schedules and availability all vary. No matter which students speak to your class, the presentations will be compelling.

April 27

Points North: An Arctic Sojourn

Jeff Milsteen, JD

This program will cover the surprisingly controversial question of who the first person was to reach the North Pole, and why that question is so hard to answer. We'll also explore the quirky town of Longyearbyen, the northernmost town in the world located in the Svalbard Archipelago, deep inside the Arctic Circle. Finally, Jeff will take us on a photographic journey through this incredible region, including the extreme polar landscape and the interesting wildlife of the Arctic.

Jeff Milsteen is a retired attorney, having served for nineteen years as chief deputy attorney general of Georgia. He has also been an avid world traveler and photographic enthusiast for over thirty years. His work has been featured in numerous publications and exhibitions, most recently in a solo exhibition at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta entitled "Shuttered: The Art of Abandoned Places." He is a past president and five-time Photographer of the Year of the Southeastern Photographic Society, and a frequent speaker for photography clubs in the greater metropolitan Atlanta area. In addition, Jeff is an instructor on a variety of subjects, including law, travel, photography, and history, at several OLLI and other senior-focused lifelong learning programs. Jeff received his BA from Johns Hopkins University and his JD from Emory University.

May 4

Nuclear Waste: A Stumbling Block for Nuclear Energy

Richard Moore, PE

[Our annual business meeting and elections for new members to serve on the Executive Committee will be held at the beginning of each class this week.]

Climate change is a growing concern that needs to be addressed. Nuclear energy has been described as a carbon neutral energy source that should be tapped to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses through electric generation. However, nuclear generation has a complex set of issues that have prevented it from becoming a dominate source of electricity production. This presentation will present the history of the nuclear waste program in the U.S., the failure of the federal government to address the issue, and the consequences of that failure on consumers and taxpayers.

Richard Moore is a professional engineer with his own consulting firm. An expert in nuclear waste transportation, Richard Moore has spent over thirty years working with local, state, and federal communities and agencies to help them find safe ways to transport and store nuclear fuels.

Mr. Moore was one of the principal authors of the Western Governors' Association Transportation Safety Program Implementation Guide, which has become the standard for transporting nuclear waste safely in the United States and served as the advisor to the Western Interstate Energy Board in the development and adoption of policies for safe, secure, and uneventful transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste in the western states. In 2020-21, Rick was a member of the "Experts Team," which advised Southern California Edison on steps that it could take to maximize the opportunities to move spent nuclear fuel from the decommissioned San Onofre Generating Station to an alternative location.

Presenters and topics for the weekly classes are subject to change.
Classes cancelled for any reason will not be made up and no refund will be given.