



Fall 2023 – Wednesday Schedule

Morning Class: 10:00 – 12:00 and Afternoon Class: 1:30 – 3:30

September 13

What Would Socrates Do to Strengthen the American Education? The Ideal Way to Teach and Learn

Richard Courtright, PhD

After decades of educational "reform" movements, why have we failed to move the needle on student achievement? Do we need yet another "new" reform? The better option may not be something else new, but rather something very, very old - the Socratic mode of inquiry. This session will examine ways of teaching and learning that elicit in students a deep understanding and ignite a passion for lifelong learning - just what Socrates sought to do.

Dr. Richard Courtright is a lifelong educator, having served over a period of thirty-five years as an elementary and middle school teacher and as a district administrator in both Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. Dr. Courtright earned his BA, MEd, and PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill. He retired from public education and subsequently worked at Duke University's Talent Identification Program (TIP) as a research specialist. After twelve years there, he retired again. Rick now serves as a consultant in gifted and special education, delivering presentations at national and international conferences. He has directed summer institutes for teachers at UNC-Wilmington, Wake Forest, and Duke University. For several summers he taught master's degree students in Elon's School of Education. (Part of a proud Elon family, Rick's daughter Laura, an Elon alum, teaches gifted and talented students in the Charlotte school system, and his brother Mark retired this summer from the Elon School of Business.)

September 20

Kingdom of Madness: The Strange Story of Religious Insurrection in Münster, Germany, 1534

Jeffrey C. Pugh, MDiv, PhD

Why do three metal cages still hang on the steeple of St. Lambert's Cathedral in the city of Münster, Germany? Jeffrey C. Pugh will tell the story of those cages and the religious insurrection that changed history. Based on his historical novel, *Cages: A Tale of Insurrection*, Dr. Pugh will share the story of how a city fell under the spell of deluded prophets and conniving kings to institute a theocracy destined to change European history.

Dr. Jeffrey C. Pugh explores the intersection of culture and religion in search of how Christianity has shaped and continues to inform our world. Dr. Pugh received his MDiv from Wesley Theological Seminary and his PhD from Drew University. He joined the faculty of Elon University in 1986. A former Maude Sharpe Powell Professor of Religious Studies and Elon University Distinguished Professor, Pugh has written on topics as diverse as religion and science, the end

times, and dissenting theologians in Hitler's era, Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He lives in Charlottesville, Va. where he continues to write and publish.

September 27

Climate Change: Causes and Consequences

G. Jay Lennartson, PhD

This discussion will focus on the causes of climate change, both natural and anthropogenic, as well as the current and future impact.

Dr. G. Jay Lennartson is Director of Undergraduate Studies and Senior Lecturer in the Geography department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He also co-directs the Integrated Sciences major. His research specialties include air pollution meteorology, GIS (geographic information system), environmental planning, atmospheric hazards, aviation meteorology, and urban heat island effect.

After receiving a BA in Earth Science from Southern Connecticut State University, Dr. Lennartson went on to pursue a MS in Geosciences (Atmospheric Science) and a PhD in Geography (Climatology) from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

October 4

Audie Murphy: World War II Hero

Charles Wissinger

Audie Murphy was one of twelve children born to a very poor family in Texas and he dropped out of the fifth grade to help support and feed the family. Hunting for food helped him become proficient with a rifle. After America was brought into World War II, Audie wanted to put his marksmanship skills to good use as a soldier. Even though he was wounded three times, he still quickly rose to the rank of First Lieutenant. Along the way he earned thirty-three awards, including the Medal of Honor and the Croix de Guerre, in over nine European campaigns, making him the most decorated American soldier from World War II. Audie would go on to write a book about his experiences called *To Hell and Back*. When James Cagney heard his courageous story, he helped Audie become an actor. Audie Murphy would make 44 feature films and even played himself in the movie based on his own book.

Charles Wissinger is pleased to return to LIFE@Elon. Mr. Wissinger has been on HBO, PBS, American Hero's Channel, History Channel, National Geographic, the big screen, films in museums, and multiple local theaters. He still works with the Historic St. John's Church Foundation, re-enacting Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech, as well as doing first person presentations as Francis Scott Key, Marquis De Lafayette, Edgar Allan Poe, among others. On the main stage his favorite roles include J. Pierpont Finch (How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying), Frank Butler (Annie Get Your Gun), Bob Wallace (White Christmas) and The Old Man (A Christmas Story: The Musical).

October 11
Cave Diving for Sports and Science
Jill Yager, PhD

Remember the dramatic rescue of the young footballers rescued from the underwater cave in Northern Thailand a few years back? They were saved due to the expertise of an international team of cave divers. It's not a sport for the faint of heart and can be extremely dangerous, but the rewards can also be...interesting.

Dr. Jill Yager received her PhD in Ecological Sciences from Old Dominion University, following a discovery she made in the underwater caves of the Bahamas. She is a research associate in the Smithsonian's Department of Invertebrate Zoology, a life member and Fellow of the National Speleological Society, and a member of Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society. She has spoken with audiences around the world and is currently teaching Cave Ecology and Conservation at Warren Wilson College just outside Asheville.

October 18
Lumbering and the Worlds of Wood: Hardwoods in North Carolina
Jeffrey Hanks

Wood is an essential part of our lives, both for its beauty and its utility. This class will discuss the softwoods and hardwoods of North Carolina. It will delve into the role wood plays in the North Carolina economy as well as the world economy. Current issues and opportunities will also be addressed.

Jeffrey Hanks grew up in a rural mountain community of 5,000 people in southwest Virginia where lumber and wood products were a large factor in the local economy. Mr. Hanks spent many years in corporate life devoted to finance, strategic planning, business development, operations, and general management. In the early 1990s, he joined the family lumber business in North Carolina, becoming the third generation of his family to be involved in this industry. Jeff is a past president of the North Carolina Forestry Association and the Hardwood Manufacturers Association. He received a BS from the University of Tennessee and an MBA from the University of Chicago.

October 25
Speak, Memory: How to Write a Memoir
Allen Appel

Have you ever thought about creating and passing along a colorful account of your life to your family and mentioned the idea to said family - especially the young people - only to have been met with blank stares, or maybe even groans? Our speaker today is familiar with those stares, groans, and worse. While the bottom line will still be "Just sit down and write, dammit!," he will also give you a large helping of encouraging and practical advice.

Raised in West Virginia and a graduate of West Virginia University, Allen Appel is the celebrated author of many fiction and non-fiction books. The most well-known is Time After Time, the first

in a series of novels featuring a time-traveling history professor named Alex Balfour who encounters actual historical people and events. That book and others in the series have been included in the American Library Association's lists of Best Young Adult Novels of the Year. (Mr. Appel also wrote The Christmas Chicken but doesn't get asked much about that.) For eight years he maintained a weekly blog identity called The Thriller Guy, who passed along tips about writing, yes, thrillers. Mr. Appel is currently the senior thriller reviewer for Publishers Weekly.

November 1

Activists & Communal Havens: The Negro Motorist Green Book and African American Local History **Lisa R. Withers**

The Negro Motorist Green Book was a guide published from 1936-1966 to help African Americans travel with limited encounters of racial discrimination commonly experienced during the Jim Crow era. The booklet included over 300 locations in North Carolina where African American travelers could safely seek food, gas, and other accommodations. This presentation explores how the national narrative of the Green Book intersects with African American local history by examining various North Carolina listings along US Highway 70 & US Highway 29. The presentation will focus on the people associated with these listings who were often community activists fighting locally for economic and civil rights.

Lisa R. Withers is a doctoral candidate in the History Department at North Carolina State University, where she is currently working on a dissertation entitled "The Negro Motorist Green Book and African American Community History." Ms. Withers earned a BA in African & Afro-American Studies with a History minor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a MA in History with a Museum Studies concentration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her professional experiences include working in university archives, historic house museums, historic sites, local history museums, and teaching undergraduate history survey courses.

November 8

Family History Stories That Bring Us Together: Genealogy and the FamilySearch Archives **Dave Gammon and Michele Doyle**

People are often inspired to connect with their family histories across generations. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provides FamilySearch free of charge to everyone, regardless of tradition, culture, or religious affiliation. FamilySearch resources help millions of people around the world discover their heritage and connect with family members. This presentation will explain how you can access the resources locally at the Elon Family History Center or how to utilize the FamilySearch.org website.

Dave Gammon will lead the discussion in the morning class. Michele Doyle will be the speaker in the afternoon class.

Dave Gammon is a professor of Biology at Elon, but his interest in family history began much earlier. Both his parents frequently shared stories of their ancestors with him. Now, as part of his

unpaid church service, Dave leads a committee focused on family history work for his Burlington congregation. (You may recognize Dave's name – he is the coordinator of Tectonic Plates: Alamance County's Science Café, that several of our members attend each month!)

Michele Doyle is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Genealogical Society. She has been involved with genealogy for over 30 years. For the past 12 years, she has been a volunteer with the Family History training team for her church, training other church members in the use of FamilySearch.

November 15

Lives of Women in Ancient Rome: Roles, Status, Rights, and Some Unexpected Facts

Linda Danford

In this class you will be introduced to some surprising facts about Roman women of the Late Republic and Early Empire, a period in which the lives of these women compare closely with that of women in the western world as recently as the first half of the twentieth century. You will learn about the factors or variables that have the greatest impact on the roles and status of women both then and now.

Linda Danford was born and raised in New Jersey. She took her undergraduate degree in Classics at Smith College and her graduate degree in Classical Literature and Philology from Yale University. Before retiring in 2011, Linda taught for 22 years in the Classical Studies Department of University of North Carolina at Greensboro where her specialties were Latin pedagogy and women in the ancient Greek and Roman world. She created courses on various aspects of Roman daily life, entertainment, sports, religion, and, particularly, the health and legal status of women.

November 16 – A SPECIAL ZOOM PRESENTATION OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

Family is a Gift: Unwrapping Family Communications for the Holidays

Charlotte Williams

As the holiday season approaches, we have much to be thankful for as we prepare to end one year and enter a new year. Many of us receive and give gifts during this time of year. What about the gift of family? As we visit, have dinners, and attend gatherings, let's unwrap the gift of family communication with care.

Family Well-being coach Charlotte Williams, MEd, CHC, will present practical approaches for building intentional family communication that cultivates healthy relationships. Participants will learn relationship-building strategies and simple coaching techniques that can be used to strengthen conversations in life, family, and work.

Charlotte Williams brings a background in public health to her understanding of higher education and the student life landscape. She serves as the Associate Director for Student Wellness at Elon University. In that role she works with her team to champion a campus culture of holistic well-being for all.

A native North Carolinian, she received a BS in Public Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a MEd degree in Health Education & Promotion from East Carolina University. She recently completed the Leadership for Diversity Institute through the National Coalition Building Institute International. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Organizational Change and Leadership at the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education. Her research interests include restorative justice practices, women's leadership, employee well-being, and family dynamics.

November 22

THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 29

Birding Vacations: Birds and Bird Watching in your Travels

Dennis E. Burnette

When you take up the hobby of birdwatching (or “birding”), you will discover that birds are nearly everywhere. There is hardly any place on earth that does not have birds, at least some of the time. This hobby can be practiced while visiting your children and grandchildren, going to the beach with the family, or out of state on business. In this session Dennis Burnette will discuss how you can continue to enjoy your hobby on the go.

Dennis E. Burnette is a retired college professor who volunteers as a nature educator on birds, butterflies, and native plants. He does numerous presentations and conducts field trips for groups, such as nature organizations, master gardeners, garden clubs, church groups, and scouts. Recently, he received the very prestigious Order of the Longleaf Pine in recognition of his volunteer services to North Carolina.

December 6

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.

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.