



Spring 2024 – Wednesday Schedule
Morning Class: 10:00 – 12:00 and Afternoon Class: 1:30 – 3:30

February 14

The Tuscarora Indian Nation and their Role in North Carolina History

Arwin Smallwood, PhD

This class will cover the history of the Tuscarora of North Carolina and their impact on both North Carolina and American history from the 16th century to the present. It will also explore the relationship between the Tuscarora and the various Native Americans that traded, warred, were in alliance with them, and ultimately were absorbed by or intermixed with them. This presentation begins with the early migration of the Tuscarora to North Carolina and does a thorough investigation of early Tuscarora political and cultural developments and folk culture. The major objective of this class is to help those in attendance better understand the evolution of the Tuscarora in North Carolina and America from before the period of European contact and settlement through the colonial and early antebellum period.

Dr. Arwin D. Smallwood is the chair of the Department of History and Political Science and a professor of History at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro. He has also served as Interim Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. A native North Carolinian, he received his BA in Political Science in 1988 and his MA in History in 1990 from North Carolina Central University and his PhD in Early U.S. and African American History from The Ohio State University in 1997. His academic career has also taken him to Bradley University and the University of Memphis where he contributed to the building of the department's PhD program in African American History.

The author of several books and articles as well as archived papers and the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships, and grants, including the National Endowment for the Humanities African American Research Fellowship, Dr. Smallwood has participated in the award-winning UNC-TV film documentary, The Birth of a Colony: North Carolina. In 2021 he was honored with the Holshouser Award for Excellence in Public Service, a major faculty award given by the University of North Carolina System.

February 21

Finding Joy on Death Row

Dewey Williams

Based on the book, *Finding Joy on Death Row: Unexpected Lessons from Lives We Discarded* (2023), this class is the powerful story of a broken preacher's transformative experience learning about joy from Death Row prisoners, combined with dramatic handwritten responses from more than twenty men currently sentenced to die. Williams journeys into the hearts and minds of those sentenced to death, illuminating the ways in which the human spirit can suffer—and soar. The

testimonies and contemplations of those sentenced to die offer readers a unique opportunity to hear from individuals whose lives are marked by their looming execution.

Dewey Williams is a Pastor of Mt. Bright Missionary Baptist Church in Hillsborough, North Carolina, a doctoral student at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, and a graduate of Duke Divinity School. In 2017 Dewey's sermon series, Joy on Death Row, won the top award at Yale Divinity School's Theology of Joy and the Good Life competition.

February 28

The Drug Development Process and the Danger of Big Pharma

Chris D'Inzeo

How are new drugs found? How are they tested? And what happens if they are approved before they are proven safe? In the mid-1950s Thalidomide was used widely across Europe, but Dr. Frances Kelsey, a safety reviewer for the FDA, refused to approve it and her hesitation was well-founded. Ultimately, the story of thalidomide and Dr. Kelsey was used to introduce changes that have shaped how drugs are made and tested today. Using thalidomide as a case study, this presentation will walk through the drug development process from discovery to pre-clinical and clinical testing to post-approval monitoring.

Christopher D'Inzeo is a fourth-year chemistry major at Elon University. Throughout his undergraduate years, he has engaged in research through the Chemistry Department at Elon and through summer research programs at Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Passionate about using tools from chemistry to study biological systems, Chris is pursuing a career in research after his graduation in May.

March 6

Braver Angels

Steve Warshaw, PhD

“Politics” has become an increasingly toxic term. Many Americans find that it is no longer possible to have a civil conversation at with those on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Braver Angels believes this growing animosity is the crisis of our time and threatens our nation. The organization was formed shortly after the 2016 election and has grown to become the nation’s largest grassroots movement uniting red and blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize our country. The group runs workshops, debates and other events where ‘red’ (conservative) and ‘blue’ (liberal) participants attempt to better understand one another’s positions and discover their shared values.

Dr. Steve Warshaw has been a member of Braver Angels since November of 2017. He serves as Statewide Coordinator for Braver Angels in North Carolina. He is also chair of a national team that assists local Braver Angels Alliances in hosting debates, and he is a member of the Braver Angels Alliance of Central North Carolina.

A native Texan, he received his BA in Biology from Austin College in Sherman, Texas, and his PhD in Biology from Yale University. While on active duty in the Navy, he worked for the National

Naval Research Institute and was subsequently employed by Texas Water Quality Board, Texas Water Development Board, and Hardin [Texas] Independent School District. In 1985 he joined the staff of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and served as instructor in Biology, Head of Science, and Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs during his tenure. He received the Science Teaching Achievement Recognition Award from the National Science Teachers Association in 1986 and the Distinguished Service Award in Administration/Supervision from the North Carolina Science Teachers Association in 2012. He retired in 2015.

March 13

Stay Strong: Resistance Exercise for Health

Takudzwa "Titch" Madzima, PhD

Exercise and dietary interventions can help counteract the physical and psychosocial adverse effects of both cancer and cancer therapies. Using state of the art measurement techniques, Dr. Madzima is investigating the interaction between nutrition, body composition, and metabolism. His presentation will also cover non-pharmacological interventions that can help reduce and possibly reverse the loss of muscular mass and strength in people with cancer as well as improve their quality of life.

Titch Madzima is Associate Professor and Chair of Exercise Science at Elon University. He routinely mentors undergraduate research, has collaborated on multiple diversity and inclusion grant projects to support curricular and co-curricular innovations, and was recognized with the Elon College, the College of Arts & Sciences, Excellence in Teaching award in 2021. His disciplinary research involves investigating the efficacy of exercise and dietary interventions to counteract the physical and psychosocial adverse effects of both cancer and cancer therapies.

March 20

The Life and Music of Tony Bennett

Gary Hastings and Tyler Battle

Accomplished jazz trumpeter, vocalist, and author Gary Hastings will present a concert on the music and life of American singer and icon Tony Bennett, who died on July 21, 2023. Bennett's influence on the "Great American Songbook" was prolific, and he left an indelible mark on the face of American jazz with his passionate renditions of timeless classics and contemporary songs. The many benevolent projects launched by Bennett in support of the arts and his commitment to equality and civil rights causes will also be discussed. Messieurs Hastings and Battle will present his life and music through lecture, vintage recordings, and live performances.

Gary Hastings is an accomplished jazz trumpeter who has performed in jazz settings across the country and around the world. For ten years he was the lead trumpet in the US Airways Jazz Orchestra and for over twenty-five years he toured with the Guy Lombardo Royal Canadians. He has also performed with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, and the Nelson Riddle Orchestra. An authority on the music of Louis Armstrong, Mr. Hastings has performed many musical tributes to Armstrong's life and music. In addition, he is a retired assistant chief of police in Greensboro, North Carolina, and has authored a popular criminal investigation textbook plus five police detective novels.

Turner Battle is a successful composer, arranger, keyboardist, and music producer. He has been involved in projects heard on MTV and HBO and has composed and arranged original music for major companies. He has also performed with some of the great jazz musicians and singers of our time. Among other talents, Mr. Battle is an award-winning voiceover artist, and his voice has been heard on voice mail, audiobooks, video games, walking museum tours, and more. A graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, he was the principal arranger for its Blue and Gold Marching Machine Band from 1980-1987.

March 27

The Radical Grandmas of Thailand: The State of Community in Na Nong Bong Megan Curling

Covering the years following the 2014 coup, this presentation will help students understand the history of political affairs and student protests that led to the current climate in the country. They will learn about the history of the gold mine construction and subsequent environmental disaster that occurred in Na Nong Bong, as well as all the ways the villagers have pivoted their lifestyles to survive. Most importantly, an update on the current restoration efforts and the future plan for justice will be shared. This presentation will focus on the importance of global citizenship and cultural competence through a unique interdisciplinary lens often overlooked in Western culture.

[This lecture is an update to Megan's student presentation last spring, following two years of research. Members who heard that talk were eager to hear the current status of Na Nong Bong.]

*Originally from Walnut Cove, N.C., **Megan Curling '23** was a Communications Fellow and Lumen Scholar during her time at Elon. She majored in journalism and public health studies with a minor in human service studies. A recipient of the Lumen Prize, she explored the cultural and environmental impact of a gold mine in northeast Thailand, working closely with the non-profit, Radical Grandma Collective, where she volunteers with their communications team. As a senior at Elon, after three years of broad involvement, she served as VP of Finance for the Student Government Association, an apartment manager, a tour guide, Elon's student board member to Harvest Table Culinary Group, the president of LEAF: Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Friends, and as the student representative to the 1923 Engagement Committee. Following graduation, Curling began her yearlong placement at Cone Health through the Elon Year of Service Fellows Program. While still exploring career opportunities for next year, Curling is excited to serve as one of two Youth Trustees at Elon through the spring of 2025.*

April 3

Discoveries from the James Webb Space Telescope Stephen Danford, PhD

The James Webb Space Telescope is the 'big brother' of the Hubble Space telescope. Launched 31 years after Hubble, and with 6x the light gathering power, Webb looks significantly farther back in time than Hubble and can teach us more about the formation of the first galaxies in the early universe, about the exoplanets that orbit other stars, and about the formation of stars and planets in our own galaxy. It is little more than a year and a half since Webb was launched and the early science is starting to pour in.

Dr. Stephen Danford taught physics and astronomy at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for 38 years before his retirement in 2014. An observational astronomer, he served as Physics Department chair for 8 years and as Director of Observatories with responsibilities for the UNCG telescopes and planetarium. He has worked with the 0.8-meter telescope at the Three College Observatory and was instrumental in its founding in 1977.

Dr. Danford was raised in Wisconsin and was educated at Dartmouth College (Physics) and Yale University (Physics and Astronomy). He is the author of numerous publications in the areas of A- and B-types stars, stellar spectroscopy, emission line stars and Population II stars.

April 10

North Carolina at War: The Tar Heels in World War II

Jo Ann Williford

Using a combination of lectures, photos, documents, music, and videos, this session will examine the contributions of and the consequences for North Carolinians in World War II. Focusing on American society in general and North Carolina citizens, it will explore how life changed for those on the home front and in the military.

Jo Ann Williford has a BA in History and teacher certification from Meredith College and a MA in American History from UNC Greensboro. She worked for over thirty years at the Office of Archives and History, most of them as an educator, including nine years as Education Coordinator for the State Capitol Building. Her last fifteen years were spent as state coordinator for National History Day in North Carolina, an in-school academic program for students in grades 6-12. Ms. Williford has also taught in the Osher Lifelong Institute at North Carolina State.

April 17

Undergraduate Research Presentations

Various Elon Students

Join us for a riveting exploration of new scholarship from Elon's brightest young voices. 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 24

How Latinx Immigrants in the US Benefit Both their Home and Host Countries

Vanessa Bravo, PhD

People migrate internationally for different reasons. When they do, they integrate into their new environments and, at the same time, they also keep ties with their countries of origin. Host and home governments have realized the benefits that immigrants can bring, and they have started to build and cultivate relationships with immigrant communities at home and abroad. Why is this? What are the main benefits of sustaining these relationships? Focusing on Latinx immigrants in the United States, this talk explores some of the ways in which nations benefit from immigration.

Dr. Vanessa Bravo is a professor in the Elon School of Communications. She had extensive experience as a journalist and editor for the newspaper, La Nacion (Grupo Nacion), before coming to Elon in 2011. She received the Elon School of Communications Faculty Excellence in Research Award in 2017 and Elon University's Distinguished Scholar Award in 2022. Dr. Bravo received her BA. from Universidad de Costa Rica and her MA and PhD from the University of Florida where she was a Fulbright Scholar from 2001-2003.

May 1

The Geography of Alamance County

Ryan Kirk, PhD

Alamance County has distinctive geographic characteristics that have strongly influenced human activity over the past several hundred years. In this session, you will learn introductory concepts in geographic analysis, and then collectively examine the county's history through a series of maps. Starting with Native American trading paths, we will work our way through key moments in local history, including colonial settlement, the Battle of Alamance, the rise of the textile industry, the arrival of the railroad, the Civil War, Jim Crow, urban renewal, and the modern era of urban planning.

Dr. Ryan Kirk is an associate professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at Elon, specializing in mapping and spatial analysis for environmental management and urban planning applications. He has worked at Elon for fifteen years and lives in Burlington with his wife and two teenage sons. He has served on the Burlington Planning & Zoning Commission, the Alamance County Recreation & Parks Commission, and the Destination Burlington Strategic Planning Committee.

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.