

life@ELON

Spring 2025 – Wednesday Schedule

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

February 12

Bats: Masters of the Dark

Jill Yager, Ph.D.

To put it mildly, bats have a pretty bad reputation, but did you know they can eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes an hour and are the only mammals that can fly? Join us for a fascinating look into the lives of bats and the furry night flyers. Jill Yager is a biologist and an adjunct biology professor at Warren Wilson College, and Professor Emerita is from Antioch College. Her expertise is the ecology of submerged caves, but even though she is not a bat biologist Yager has been a bat fan since her grandfather took her into her first cave and showed them to her. She'll share her enthusiasm for these creatures with a wide variety of lifestyles. You'll meet the insect-eating bats, the fruit eaters, and, of course, the blood drinkers! How are bats beneficial, and are there rewards for having bats hang around? There are lots of amazing bat facts to discover. You might never have given these animals a second thought (except for screaming when they appear in movies). Still, after this presentation and discussion, you too might come away being a bat aficionado!

Jill Yager received her Ph.D. 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 Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society member. She has spoken with audiences worldwide and is currently teaching Cave Ecology and Conservation to a class of lucky students at Warren Wilson College just outside Asheville.

February 19

Greek Mythology and Video Games: Twisting the Ancient Tales

Ethan Divon

Greece's ancient world was filled with many mystical and wondrous stories of heroes and monsters. Even after thousands of years, we continue to tell those same stories, reimagining and reinventing them to fit our needs best. One such method of reinvention is that of video games, a newer and more popular media, which often lets participants experience these ancient stories as characters. This session will introduce participants not only to how ancient mythology can and has been adjusted from its original context but also to why these changes are so fascinating and what they can tell us about the society we currently live in.

*Raised in suburban New York and moving to North Carolina, **Ethan Divon** is a current Classical Studies major at UNC Greensboro. With a deep passion for cross-cultural mythology and a personal interest in video games, he has fused his passions to allow the two to benefit each other. Besides his work with the Classics Gaming Collaborative, an organization that focuses on how gaming and Classical Studies can be intertwined in education, he also has a comical fascination with translating various songs into ancient Greek.*

February 26

What's New in Nutrition: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Sylvia Moore, Ph.D., RDN, FADA

Philosophy: Your diet should be based on solid evidence and support your lifestyle. Eating should be fun and social. Moderation in everything—including moderation—can help you find balance.

Part 1 – Quick review of the components of a diet for healthy aging and activity

Part 2 – The new weight loss drugs: Safety and Efficacy

Part 3 – Food as Medicine? Prebiotics, probiotics, and the gut microbiome

Part 4 – Environmental concerns: A – Highly Processed Foods; B – Plastics in the environment

Part 5 – Making Choices for Pleasurable and Healthy Eating

Sylvia Moore has been a member of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for 51 years and still maintains her RDN credential after retiring from paid employment. She provided clinical nutrition services in hospitals and outpatient clinics; worked as the first state public health nutritionist in Wyoming; taught nutrition to medical residents, medical students, and practicing physicians; and served as a regional Dean for the University of Washington School of Medicine, opening WWAMI - the first medical school in Wyoming in 1997. Her research focused on obesity treatment, prevention, and nutrition education for physicians.

March 5

The Stephen Robbins Chronicles: Three Novels by Terry Roberts

Terry Roberts

Stephen Robbins is featured in three of Terry Roberts' six novels. Robbins (like his creator) is a native of the mountains of western North Carolina and has proved himself to be skillful at solving mysteries – in a German internment camp in Hot Springs, North Carolina (“A Short Time to Stay Here”), the immigration center at Ellis Island (“My Mistress’ Eyes Are Raven Black”), and most recently in Asheville’s Grove Park Inn (“The Devil Hath a Pleasing Shape”). Roberts will share his approach to creating this protagonist for his award-winning novels.

Terry Roberts is the author of six celebrated novels: “A Short Time to Stay Here” (winner of the Willie Morris Prize for Southern Fiction and the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction); “That Bright Land” (winner of the Thomas Wolfe Literary Award, the James Still Award for Writing About the Appalachian South and the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction); and, “The Holy Ghost Speakeasy and Revival” (a finalist for the 2019 Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction), My Mistress’ Eyes are Raven Black (Finalist for the 2022 Best Paperback Original Novel by the International Thriller Writers Organization), “The Sky Club” (a finalist for the 2023 Thomas Wolfe Literary Award), and recently released in October 2024, “The Devil Hath a Pleasing Shape.”

Roberts is a lifelong teacher, educational reformer, and award-winning novelist. He is a native of the mountains of Western North Carolina—born and bred. His ancestors include six generations of mountain farmers and the bootleggers and preachers who appear in his novels. He was raised close by his grandmother, Belva Anderson Roberts, who was born in 1888 and passed him the magic of the past along with the grit and humor of mountain storytelling.

Roberts is the Director of the National Paideia Center and lives in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife, Lynn.

March 12

The Book of Kells: The Masterpiece of Early Irish Art

Kathleen Fisher, Ph.D.

The Book of Kells is a medieval Gospel manuscript thought by many to have been created between the seventh and ninth centuries by Christian monks living on the Scottish island of Iona. On public display at Trinity College, Dublin, this Irish cultural treasure is celebrated for its incomparable artistry. Brilliant colors, detailed ornamentation, and elaborate full-page illustrations known as “illuminations” make Kells unique among texts of its time. In this session, we’ll look closely at examples of the design and portraiture for which the manuscript is famous and explore some of the cultural and religious history that gives the Book of Kells its enduring intrigue and mystery.

Kathleen Fisher taught Religious Studies and Theology for twenty-one years at Assumption University in Massachusetts before retiring to Chapel Hill in 2023. She also taught at Boston University where she received her Ph.D. in Medieval History and Religion. Research in early Irish history and medieval monasticism led to her interest in the Book of Kells and she has presented the manuscript to various audiences ever since. Fisher continues to teach remotely at the Worcester Institute for Senior Education (WISE) where, since 2019, she has offered courses in The Gnostic Gospels, Celtic Spirituality, the poet Mary Oliver, and, most recently, The Mysticism of Rumi and Francis of Assisi.

March 19

Equinox and the Mysteries of Pilot Mountain

James P. McKelvey

A photograph taken in 2012 started this author’s research on Pilot Mountain and ended with his book, “Faces of Pilot Mountain: Intriguing Journey into the Deep Mysteries.” This book covers the two hundred and seventy years of published information on Pilot Mountain. The first chapter alone provides enough information about the mountain to make the reader a guide for family and friends. You will also learn how the sacred mountain connects to George Washington, Otis Redding, Stax Volt, the Beatles, Andy Griffith, Lester Flatt, the daredevil stunt flyer Zach Reynolds and so much more. A documentary was filmed based on the book by a California crew in April of 2024 that may air on the streaming service, Prime Video.

McKelvey is now working on a second book called, “The Lessons of Pilot Mountain”, focusing on the oral history of the mountain. He’s collaborating with Occaneechee and Cherokee wisdom keepers for this project. Research for the second book reveals how important Pilot Mountain was in the ancient past as a pilgrimage ceremony site. The sun on the equinox rises right on a notch in the Big Pinnacle. There is a sun “dagger” at noon and in the evening on the same day there is an almost perfect pyramid shadow that builds toward the Sauratown Mountain and then slowly fades. Pilot Mountain State Park acknowledges “highly significant” prehistoric burials on the mountain.

Did you know North Carolina has a 1,500-foot-tall quartzite pyramid? Learn more about this sacred mountain a little over an hour's drive from Elon and be inspired to visit it yourself.

James P. McKelvey is a photographer based in Hillsborough, North Carolina. From 1979 to 1992, he worked and wrote for Variety in New York City, the Detroit Free Press in Detroit, Michigan, The Face in London, and U Magazine in New York City. His photographs have been published in the Raleigh News and Observer, No Depression Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine, and CMT television. The James McKelvey photo archive, which contains 4,500 images, is part of the Southern Folklife Collection in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

March 26

The life, musical legacy, and career of trumpeter Doc Severinsen, the bandleader of The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson Gary Hastings and Turner Battle

Doc Severinsen is one of the most iconic musicians of the twentieth century and is recognized as one of the world's most dedicated and talented trumpet players. As the band leader of The Tonight Show Orchestra, he performed with some of the finest musicians and entertainers in America. He was a household name for playing five nights a week on NBC for millions of television viewers. With his wild clothing and glitzy style, Doc was more than a flashy star. He contributed to the development of new trumpet designs. He had numerous pieces written for him which he performed around the United States with symphony orchestras and symphonic bands touching the lives of the American people and beyond.

Gary Hastings is a versatile professional trumpet player and singer. He became a fan of Doc Severinsen as a young band student and has studied the many facets of his professional life, including attending several master classes presented by Severinsen. Hastings has heard him perform live over 40 times in the last 50 years at venues across the United States.

This presentation will include his trumpet renditions of Doc Severinsen favorites, recordings, video clips, and little-known facts about this American legend, accompanied by jazz pianist Turner Battle. He will explore the world of The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and Doc's unique relationship with the king of late-night television. He will also reveal Doc's attempt at retiring to Mexico, where he discovered a new adventure that returned him to touring and recording.

Gary Hastings is an accomplished jazz trumpeter who has performed in jazz settings nationwide and worldwide. He was the lead trumpet in the US Airways Jazz Orchestra for ten years 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, 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 our time's great jazz musicians and singers.

Among other talents, Battle is an award-winning voiceover artist, and his voice has been heard on voicemail, audiobooks, video games, walking museum tours, and more. A North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University graduate, he was the principal arranger for its Blue and Gold Marching Machine Band from 1980-1987.

April 2

The Continents are Moving

Larry Wakeford

One of the great scientific discoveries of the 20th century was the phenomenon known as plate tectonics. Essentially, this process explains how the earth's continents have been moving throughout the four billion years of terrestrial history. How could this be? As late as the 1950s most geologists said there was no way to explain how this could happen. Yet, by the late 1970s, plate tectonics had become an accepted theory. The evidence came from around the world including the discovery of undersea mountain ranges, the Hawaiian Islands, the formation of the Himalayas, and even the ancient rocks of North Carolina. It is an astounding story of powerful forces creating the supercontinent, Pangaea, opening up great oceans, and resulting in the current arrangement of continents.

*After graduating from Manhattan College in 1965, **Larry Wakeford** served for two years in the Peace Corps in Colombia, introducing new science curricula to Colombian elementary and secondary teachers. He then completed the MAT program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1968) and began his teaching career at Walpole High School in Massachusetts. He became the director/clinical professor of Science Education and senior lecturer in the Brown University Teacher Education Program in Providence, Rhode Island, for fifteen years. His last teaching position was as an adjunct instructor at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.*

Wakeford has received Brown University's Sheridan Award for Distinguished Contribution to Teaching and Learning. He was chosen as the North Carolina Region 5 Teacher of the Year, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Teacher of the Year, and the Kaiser Permanente Chair for Science Teaching.

April 9

The Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition

Carole Troxler, Ph.D., Loy Campbell, and LaShauna Austria

During this age of reckoning with America's past and present racial injustice, learn about the local history of Alamance County. The Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition memorializes documented victims. Of racial terror, fosters meaningful dialogue about race and justice, and educates our county about our history, using Equal Justice Initiative projects and community events in collaboration with relevant organizations. This program will provide a discussion of the three known lynchings that took place in Alamance County from 1870-1920 and the efforts today by community members to honor their lives.

Carole Troxler has lived in Alamance County since 1969 when she and her husband came here to teach at Elon University. (They were children). 2003 she retired from teaching, but not from researching and writing history. Most of her books and articles are not about Alamance County, but since the 1990s, when she studied and co-wrote “Shuttle & Plow: A History of Alamance County, North Carolina,” its issues keep tugging at her. The strongest pull has been the Reconstruction period, and now she is researching the triumph of white supremacy in Caswell and Alamance counties from the end of the Civil War to about 1920. Her work with the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition centers on detailing and documenting two 1870 murders and their contexts. Carole says she messes with plants, plays the dulcimer, and nurses her aches and pains when she is not writing.

Loy Campbell is an occupational therapist with a special interest in dementia care. She works mostly in the hospital setting, as well as dementia care training for caregivers, first responders, faith communities, and the general community. Outside of her day job, Loy is the co-convener of the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition, sending many emails and getting folks organized. In her free time, Loy enjoys traveling to National Parks, cheering on the Virginia Tech Hokies, playing tennis, and reading as much as possible.

LaShauna Austria owns and principal operator of Seeds of Change Consulting and Kindred Seedlings Farm. She has a demonstrated record of collaborating with faith-based and secular communities to address race, food justice, land ownership, and equity issues. Building on her experience in leadership, management, and administrative roles with for-profit and nonprofit organizations, she has devoted her current professional life to advancing racial equity and building better food systems locally and beyond. Born and raised in Alamance County, LaShauna is passionate about rural life, preserving farmland and natural resources, and Southern foodways. LaShauna is a community organizer, building strong relationships, collaborating with local organizations, and cultivating the land and space at Kindred Seedlings Farm. As an ordained minister, LaShauna seeks ways to engage faith communities in anti-racism work.

April 16

Shared Rivers: Catalyst for Cooperation or Source of Conflict?

Barbara Miller, Ph.D.

Barbara Miller will begin with an overview of international rivers and approaches to fostering cooperative development of shared rivers. This brief introduction will be followed by stories of her personal experience working in Africa on the formation of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), an effort by ten (later eleven) countries to pursue their shared vision to “achieve sustainable socioeconomic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources.’

The Nile, the longest river in the world, traverses varied landscapes and cultures from its headwaters in the highlands of Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Burundi to its delta in Egypt on the Mediterranean. This is a remarkable story of how those countries came together, despite enormous challenges, in a historic decision to pursue cooperative and joint development of the Nile, and about their appeal to the World Bank to facilitate this process and to coordinate international support for their efforts. Miller will talk about the process bringing these diverse countries

together; the growth and development of the NBI into a regional institution that built technical capacity and fostered more than \$10 billion of joint infrastructure development; and the many setbacks and challenges along the way--and that despite the many conflicts continuing in the region, the NBI still functions.

Barbara Miller, a Civil Engineer, worked for thirty-five years developing and managing water, energy, and environmental systems in the US and overseas. She was with the World Bank for fifteen years, providing strategic and technical leadership in developing international rivers. As Manager of the Nile Program, she supported eleven countries in the cooperative development and management of the Nile.

Previously, Miller was President of Rankin International, a small consulting firm providing water, energy, and environment expertise. She worked for ten years at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), responsible for flood management and reservoir system planning in the Tennessee River Basin. She also worked in the private sector and with the US Environmental Protection Agency.

She received her civil engineering degrees from the University of Illinois (Ph.D., 1984) and the University of Wisconsin (M.S., 1979). She is a licensed Professional Engineer. She retired in 2011, and then spent three years with her husband in Haifa, Israel, providing voluntary service at the Baha'i World Center. She then moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and to Chapel Hill in 2021.

April 23

Undergraduate Research Presentations

Various Elon Students

Join us to explore 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. A class member shared this about the student presentations:

“Over the last two years, I have continued to be amazed at the high levels of research and execution of these students' projects. I have had to keep reminding myself that these are undergraduates. In many cases, although the student is graduating, they plan to continue their research or have shared the plan for the next group of students who will continue their initial research. I have learned so much about various topics and their dedication to finding the cure, making this a better place for all citizens, or taking in-depth looks at political and social issues. You don't want to miss these sessions.”

April 30

Driving Safely on the Information Highway

Gary Sheehan, CISSP, CERP, CIS LI, CTPRP

Navigating cyberspace safely and protecting your personal technology and information assets is becoming harder and more complex daily. As more data is generated about us and systems are becoming smarter with the introduction of AI into the consumer market, we all must understand how we can protect our data, privacy, and digital identities. Since the Internet does not protect our privacy or data very well, it is up to each one of us to understand how to identify, avoid, prevent, and recover from the plethora of phishing scams, fraud attempts, and malicious software. We all need to ensure we use well-maintained equipment and avoid potholes, reckless drivers, and road hazards when traveling on the information highway.

Learning objectives for this course include:

- Understanding the components of cyberspace
- Understanding the practice of cybersecurity
- Understanding the practice of resiliency when working in cyberspace
- Learning which tools are important when protecting personal technology assets
- Learning how to use security tools and concepts to protect valuable information and data

Gary Sheehan is the Director of Information Security at Elon University. He is responsible for minimizing the risk of unauthorized data access, leading Elon's information security efforts, creating and implementing policy, and designing and delivering the university's information security awareness training program. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration from Baldwin-Wallace University and over 40 years of experience in Information Technology and Information Security.

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