



Fall 2025 – Wednesday Schedule

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

September 10

Engaged Learning for Life: Curiosity, Knowledge, and Application

Jessie L. Moore, Ph.D.

Engaged learning entails actively and intentionally participating in our own learning, not only at discrete moments but rather as an ongoing, lifelong activity. How do we remain curious about the world around us, open to building on our prior knowledge, and committed to putting what we're learning into practice? This class explores key practices for engaged, lifelong learning, and draws on international research projects facilitated by Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning.

Jessie L. Moore is Director of the Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of Professional Writing & Rhetoric at Elon University. She leads the Center's research seminars, which support multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary inquiry on teaching and learning. She also produces the Center's multimedia resources, including concise online guides on research-informed practices for engaged learning, videos, and podcasts. She is the author of Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning and co-editor of five additional books on engaged learning in higher education. In 2021, Jessie received Elon University's Distinguished Scholar Award, and her professional service was recognized with the 2019 International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) Distinguished Service Award.

September 17

All Roads Lead to Good Mental Health

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland and Rev. Carrilea Hall

How we care for our bodies and our souls is also how we should care for our minds. The World Health Organization reports that one in four people will experience a mental health challenge at some point in their lives. The truth is that we are all pursuing well-being and striving for sound mental health. This session will help participants make the connection between a myriad of our daily routines and activities in order to understand how what we do connects to mental well-being. We will also provide information on the need for services for all members of society and ways that we can advocate with our elected officials to help this access become a reality. All of us can work for the mental health and emotional well-being of our communities.

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Council of Churches. She is a native of South Carolina and an ordained minister in The United Methodist Church. Jennifer loves South Carolina but has managed to spend all but ten years of her adult life in North Carolina. Those ten years were spent pastoring United Methodist churches across the upstate region of South Carolina. She attended Duke University several times and, in the process, earned a B.A., double majoring in English and Religion, a Master of Divinity, a Ph.D. in religion, and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies. Prior to coming to the Council, she spent 16 years as the United Methodist Chaplain at Duke University, where she also taught undergraduate and divinity school classes, served on committees and task forces,

and attended lots of basketball games. She writes frequently for various publications when time permits and preaches regularly in congregations across North Carolina. Jennifer has two adult children, Nathan, who is a software developer in Durham, and Hannah, who is a digital marketing analyst in Charlotte. Jennifer is the overjoyed grandparent of Benjamin and Theodore.

***Rev. Carrilea Hall** is from Sylva, in the mountains of western North Carolina. She attended Brevard College where she played soccer and earned a B.A. in Health Science Studies. She earned her Master of Divinity and a certificate in Religion and Health from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Carrilea is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church and has served in a local congregation for several years. Her passion for faith, health, and justice led her to join the Council as the West Regional Associate Director for Partners in Health and Wholeness. She currently lives in Statesville with her husband, Andrew, and their two daughters, Saige and Maya. Carrilea loves the outdoors, adventures, traveling, and good conversations.*

September 24

Exploring North Carolina, Naturally
Eleanor Spicer Rice, Ph.D.

North Carolina is part of a global biodiversity hotspot. That means that parts of our state have a diversity of plants and wildlife so tremendous that we are on par with the Horn of Africa and Madagascar with the abundance of life that thrives here, and that depends on us for its survival. Eleanor Spicer Rice will take you on a tour of our state's astonishing natural world, from the last seventeen wild red wolves on the planet to the loggerhead turtles that travel thousands of miles to rest in our soft sand. We will get an ant's eye view of our state's natural wealth.

***Eleanor Spicer Rice, Ph.D.**, is an entomologist, award-winning author, and passionate science communicator who connects people with the natural world through books, podcasts, and media appearances. She earned her Ph.D. in entomology at North Carolina State University and has since authored ten books, including the acclaimed DEADLIEST series and *Ants: Workers of the World*. Eleanor is the host and writer of *North Carolina, Naturally*, a print, video, and podcast series for *Our State* magazine, showcasing the state's remarkable biodiversity. Her work has been featured on NPR's Science Friday, CBC's Quirks and Quarks, Discovery's What on Earth, and more. Whether writing about belly button ecosystems or homing pigeons, she inspires audiences to fall in love with, and care for, the natural world. She lives in Raleigh with her husband, two sons, dogs, a lizard, and a valiant flock of homing pigeons.*

October 1

Classical Pianist Goes Gospel
Robert Buxton, Ph.D.

After receiving a rousing reception this past year when he shared violin music transcribed to the piano, members enthusiastically requested to have Robert Buxton return. When asked if he had other programs he would be interested in presenting, he suggested a personal favorite. His dad loves southern gospel music and introduced it to Robert at an early age. So, when Robert began taking piano lessons at age four, playing it came naturally. He will present a program of Southern Gospel music, which has roots in African

American spirituals, 18th century English hymns, Appalachian bluegrass music, and many more forms, together rendering a musical style unique to the southeastern United States.

Robert Buxton brings music from the past to life today as a performer and public speaker. He offers a unique improvised lecture-recital combination with humor, personal stories, and dazzling piano playing. As a soloist and chamber musician Buxton has performed in New York (Carnegie and Alice Tully Halls), Europe, and Japan and his interviews and recordings have been featured on major classical radio stations. He received his master's and doctorate degrees studying under Vladimir Virago at the University of North Texas.

October 8

Heartbeats - Rhythm and Regulation

Bonny Buckley

Rhythms occur throughout our lives, including heartbeats, breath, steps, and the flow of our thoughts and words. During times of distress, our rhythms can feel very dysregulated. The use of therapeutic rhythm can be a useful and fun strategy in self-regulation. Learn how making music together is connected to empathy, oxytocin, dopamine, and decreases in cortisol (connected to stress). Bonny will share some original songs and participants will have the opportunity to create music together while exploring a 'petting zoo' of instruments including a variety of drums, gongs, singing bowls, tuning forks, chimes, and whatever else Bonny can fit in her van! Bring your curiosity and prepare to have fun!

Bonny Buckley, with Counseling Services at Elon, is a proud Elon alum and first-generation college graduate. After earning her BFA in Music Theatre with minors in Psychology and Dance (2001), she received a master's degree in Expressive Therapies and Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health-Counselor Supervisor (LCMHCS) and a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and spent 20+ years working within nonprofit community mental health as well as providing clinical supervision and presenting at conferences.

October 15

Southern News, Southern Politics: How a Newspaper Defined a State for a Century

Rob Christensen

Rob Christensen's latest book, *Southern News, Southern Politics: How a Newspaper Defined a State for a Century*, is the story of *The News and Observer* of Raleigh and the family dynasty that owned the newspaper for more than a century. The book and the talk contain several threads: state and national politics, race, and the rise and decline of newspapers. The Daniels family served as political lieutenants to William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. They made and unmade governors. It follows the paper's early days as a voice of white supremacy to its denunciation by segregationist Jesse Helms for "selling out the South."

Rob Christensen wrote about North Carolina politics for *The News and Observer* for 45 years. He has appeared on more than 600 television or radio programs such as the CBS Evening News, ABC's Nightline, CNN's Inside Politics, MSNBC's Hardball with Chris Matthews, PBS's Jim Lehrer Newshour, NPR's Diane Rehm, ABC Radio with Mitch Albom and Don Imus in the Morning. He is the author of two

award-winning books -- The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics and The Rise and Fall of the Branchhead Boys, both published by UNC Press. Christensen, recently widowed, lives in Cary, N.C.

October 22

Bitter Blood: An Insider's Look

Ned Cline

Come get a behind-the-scenes perspective on one of North Carolina's most shocking and tragic true crime stories, the basis for the New York Times bestselling book *Bitter Blood: A True Story of Southern Family Pride, Madness, and Multiple Murder* by journalist Jerry Bledsoe. Ned Cline, who was managing editor of the *Greensboro News & Record* during the time of the murders, personally assigned Bledsoe to the story. He will explore the life of Justice Susie Sharp, the first woman to serve on the NC Supreme Court during the first part of our class. In the second part, he will discuss the devastating family tragedy that followed: a violent series of murders committed by her nephew and his lover, who was also her niece. Cline offers unique insight into this chilling case and its impact on the state and the media.

Ned Cline is a veteran journalist who has chronicled the lives of North Carolina's political and public figures for more than four decades. A former reporter, editor, and managing editor, he has authored eight biographies on individuals who shaped the state's progress. A graduate of Catawba College with a degree in political science, he was also a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University

October 29

Echoes of myth and legend in Celtic tunes

Mara Shea

Not just Ireland and Scotland, the Celtic world includes places like Wales, Isle of Man, Brittany, a bit of northern Spain, and Nova Scotia, especially Cape Breton. They all have linguistic connections with each other, and each has myths and legends – stories to explain the world around us and how we got here. This presentation will explore a little of this Celtic music world and how in many cases the titles and structures of the tunes reflect the importance of places and landscape, seasons, beliefs, and rituals. Mara will not only talk about the tunes but will play some of them to illustrate their moods and musical stories.

Mara Shea has been a dance fiddler for about 30 years – for Scottish, contra, and English country dance. She is also a teacher; her fiddle students range from 7 to 87, with most being between 50-75. She studied classical violin for the first part of her life until she was 20, when she abandoned the violin entirely, picking it up again 15 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 35 years and now lives at Twin Lakes in Elon. She travels throughout the United States and the United Kingdom playing for dance events and teaching workshops. Should you want to know more, you can go to Mara's website – marashea.com

November 5

North Carolina's Changing Climate

Walter (Walt) Robinson, Ph.D.

North Carolina enjoys a (mostly) pleasant climate, but our climate is changing as Earth warms. This talk will place North Carolina in the global context of Earth's climate system. We will explore why our weather and climate are the way they are and how and why they are changing. The growing risks from extreme weather events will be addressed, along with what we, as citizens of North Carolina and the globe, should do about climate change.

***Walt Robinson** is a professor of Atmospheric Sciences at North Carolina State University. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Physics from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from Columbia University. His research and teaching address the dynamics of Earth's atmosphere and climate, including the impacts of climate change. Robinson co-directs North Carolina State University's graduate program in Climate Change and Society, and he is a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society. In 2020 he was one of several co-authors of the North Carolina Climate Science Report mandated by then Governor Cooper.*

November 12

Chaco Canyon, the Chacoans, and their Amazing Astronomy

Larry Wakeford

Chaco Canyon is a National Historical Park in Northwest New Mexico. It was the home of Ancestral Pueblans for 300 years, 800 CE-1100 CE. The spectacular ruins of their civilization have been restored and amaze visitors from around the world. Many questions remain about this complex of buildings, kivas, and other artifacts. Who were these people? What was their city in Chaco Canyon used for? Where did they go after leaving Chaco?

Another remnant of these people was their well-developed understanding of the night skies—moon, sun, and planets. How could a society without written language gain and maintain this knowledge over centuries? To modern day Native Americans Chaco is a sacred place. For many others it has a mystical feeling about it. Larry Wakeford has visited it seven times and never ceases to be awed, so he is excited to share the amazement with our members.

*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.

November 19

The Roots of Modern Sport in the Culture of Greece and Rome

Linda Danford

Join us to explore the origins of competitive sport in antiquity as well as the many parallels between ancient and modern athletics, including professionalism, hero-worship, fanatic spectators, expensive venue construction, gambling, and cheating. Say goodbye to the amateur ideal!

***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. She has lived in Greensboro with her husband and family since 1976. Before retiring in 2011, Linda taught for 22 years in the Classical Studies Department of UNC 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 in particular the health and legal status of women. Since retirement, she has been active in the Shepherd's Center of Greensboro and served for three years as the president of the Shepherd's Center Board from 2019 to 2022.*

November 26

THANKSGIVING BREAK

December 3

The Shroud of Turin: History, Mystery, and Meaning

William Tullar, Ph.D.

Explore one of the most studied religious relics in the world – the Shroud of Turin, a relic currently housed in the Cathedral of St. John in Turin, Italy, and believed by some to be the actual burial shroud of Jesus Christ. This class will examine over a century of scholarship, scientific analysis, and religious reflection surrounding the cloth. Featuring detailed images and explanations of the Shroud's many intriguing features, the session invites thoughtful curiosity about its enduring mystery.

***William L. Tullar, Ph.D.**, is a professor of management at the Bryan School of Business and Economics at UNC Greensboro, where he has taught for 50 years. He holds a BS in Psychology from Wesleyan University, a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Rochester, and a master's in religion from Southern Evangelical Seminary. Dr. Tullar has served as a Fulbright Scholar in Germany and a visiting scholar in Russia, Moldova, and Germany. In addition to his academic work, he currently serves as a supply pastor in churches across Alamance and Guilford counties. He has published extensively on entrepreneurship, human resource management, and management development, and has consulted for the North Carolina DOT on leadership training and assessment.*

Spring 2026 Dates

February 11, 18, 25

March 4, 11, 18, 25

April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

*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.*