



Spring 2023 Schedule

Cullowhee, Main Campus (Tuesdays, 10am – 12pm)
Asheville, Biltmore Park Site (Thursdays, 10am – 12pm)

January 17 & 19, 2023

Andrew Danner – Managing our Appalachian Forests

Biography:

Andrew Danner lives in Jackson County. He is the Western Forestry Associate for Asheville based non-profit professional forestry organization EcoForesters. Andrew helps to extend the mission of conserving and restoring Appalachian forests through education and stewardship in the 8 westernmost counties and beyond. More information about EcoForesters can be found by visiting the website <https://www.ecoforesters.org/> or by email adanner@ecoforesters.org.

Presentation Outline:

A brief and informative lecture about the benefits of proper forest management for private landowners including issues with past (mis)management, or lack of proper management, and briefly discuss threats to our forests, including invasive plant and insect species. This will mostly be a big picture type of discussion and will not be focused on one facet of forest management, as it is quite wide and broad.

January 24 & 26, 2023

Dr. Wes Milner – Russia/Ukraine

Biography:

Wesley Milner is currently Director of Global Engagement and Professor of International Studies at Western Carolina University. As the chief international officer, Milner works with WCU faculty and the broader campus community to fulfill the goal of providing a global education for every student. Previously, he served as Igleheart Endowed Chair of Political Science and Executive Director of International Programs at the University of Evansville in Indiana.

Milner's international experience includes serving as a visiting professor twice at both Harlaxton College in the UK and Tokoha University in Japan as well as research travel in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Eastern/Southern Africa. He was also a visiting professor with Semester at Sea, circumnavigating the globe in four months. Further, he has had the pleasure of traveling with students on short-term study abroad programs to Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Milner's career began in Washington, DC where he spent several years as a researcher for a government contractor, working closely with a number of security and intelligence agencies.

As a professor, his primary teaching role has focused on international relations courses such as International Law, U.S. Foreign Policy, Human Rights, Politics of the Global Economy, and Global

Environmental Policy. His scholarship, which integrates globalization and broadly defined aspects of human rights, has appeared in Human Rights Quarterly, the Journal of Private Enterprise, Sociological Quarterly, International Studies and a number of edited books. Recently, his research has centered on displaced and refugee students.

January 31 & February 2, 2023

Dr. Penny Smith – Baseball and It's Relationships to American History and Culture

Biography:

Penny Smith obtained her Ph.D. in American history from Rice University. She also has an Ed.D. in educational leadership from UNC-Greensboro. A former North Carolina Teacher of the Year, she has worked in the state's public schools in multiple teaching and administrative capacities until her retirement from WCU's College of Education. Her love of baseball may reach the level of "profound character flaw".

Presentation Outline:

Baseball continues to be described as America's national pastime. This presentation explores how baseball secured that label and concludes with whether it is still accurate. It's combines a little baseball history, a little cultural history, and a synthesis of the two with speculation about changes over time.

February 7 & 9, 2023

Dr. Brian Byrd - La Crosse encephalitis-WNC's local mosquito-borne disease

Biography:

Dr. Brian Byrd is a Professor in the Environmental Health Sciences program, College of Health and Human Sciences, Western Carolina University. He received a Bachelor's degree (Biology) from the University of North Carolina at Asheville, a Master's of Science in Public Health Parasitology, and his Doctorate (PhD) from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana. During his studies at Tulane he was a pre-doctoral fellow in a CDC funded training program in vector-borne infectious diseases. He has completed additional graduate training in field epidemiology at UNC-Chapel Hill. He is an elected member of the American College of Epidemiology and a member of a number of professional organizations including the Society for Vector Ecology, American Mosquito Control Association, the NC Mosquito and Vector Control Association, and others. Currently, Dr. Byrd teaches undergraduate courses such as Medical Entomology, Principles of Epidemiology, Public Health, and other Environmental Health Science courses. His research focuses on native and invasive domestic mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases, with a regional focus on La Crosse encephalitis. He also maintains an active undergraduate research program where his students have been nationally recognized.

Presentation Outline:

Unknown to most, western North Carolina (WNC) counties are home to the majority of the mosquito disease cases that occur in our state – La Crosse encephalitis is the most common disease in NC and this disease primarily impacts children under the age of 15. During the LIFE@WCU class, Dr. Byrd will share the mosquito biology, epidemiology and updates relating

to ongoing research studies in WNC. Microscope demonstrations and methods to reduce risk will be provided.

February 14 & 16, 2023

Dr. Casey Hurley – 6 Virtues of the Educated Person

Biography:

I attended Catholic schools in Appleton, Wisconsin, from 1958-1970. After earning a B.A. in English (1973) from St. Norbert College (DePere, Wisconsin), I taught English at Xavier High School (XHS) from 1974-77. I earned a Master's degree from UW-Madison in 1978. For three years I was an assistant principal at Stoughton High School (Wisconsin), leaving to become Lodi High School (Wisconsin) principal from 1985-1988. I received a PhD from UW-Madison in 1989. Since then, I have been a professor of educational administration at Western Carolina University, retiring in 2019.

Presentation Outline:

1. What does it mean to be educated?
2. What are the qualities of the educated person?
3. What makes a person educated? Uneducated?

February 21 & 23, 2023

Denise Drury Homewood – Cultivating Cultural Curiosity at Bardo Arts Center

Biography:

Denise Drury Homewood is Executive Director of the Western Carolina University (WCU) Bardo Arts Center, where she leads the WCU Fine Art Museum and Performance Hall as well as the Arts and Entrepreneurship undergraduate certificate program. She has held senior leadership positions in arts organizations for over a decade and served the arts field for seventeen years. She holds an M.A. in Arts Administration from Florida State University. Denise has presented on topics related to arts administration, arts engagement and inclusion, and the arts in academia for organizations like Americans for the Arts, SouthArts, American Alliance of Museums, Southeastern Museums Council, North Carolina Museum's Council and teaches on these topics at WCU. She is often tapped as consultant and grant reviewer for local, regional, and state-level governmental arts agencies and arts nonprofits. Denise currently serves as the North Carolina regional representative for the national Association of Academic Museums and Galleries and previously served on the board of the North Carolina Museums Council, American Alliance of Museums Curators Committee, Jackson County Arts Council, and Asheville Area Arts Council.

Presentation Outline:

The Bardo Arts Center at Western Carolina University aims to expand perspectives through meaningful experiences in the arts. Learn how we achieve this goals through intentional artistic selections, engaging residency experiences with students and the community, and public presentations in both our 900+ seat proscenium Performance Hall and nationally accredited WCU Fine Art Museum. You'll also gain a more in-depth understanding of Shinnecock Nation ceramic artist and filmmaker, Courtney Leonard, currently exhibiting with the Museum through

May 5, and the dynamic, Grammy-nominated wind quintet performing on Thursday, February 23.

Courtney Leonard, <https://www.wcu.edu/bardo-arts-center/blog/posts/breach.aspx>

Imani Winds, <https://www.wcu.edu/bardo-arts-center/blog/posts/imani-winds.aspx>

February 28 & March 2, 2023

Russ Harris (Cullowhee), Erica Anderson (Biltmore Park) – WNC Economic Issues

Biography for Russ Harris:

Russ Harris is the Executive Director of the Southwestern Commission. The Southwestern Commission is the regional council of governments for the seven far western counties in North Carolina, the towns within those counties, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The mission of the Southwestern Commission is to improve the quality of life in the region by assisting local governments in accomplishing their goals. It does this through the work of its three departments which are Aging, Workforce Development, and Community and Economic Development.

Presentation Outline: This presentation will discuss key issues affecting the region and the ways in which the Southwestern Commission is working to address those issues.

Biography for Erica Anderson:

Erica Anderson, AICP, joined Land of Sky Regional Council in the spring of 2010 and has been the Economic & Community Development Director since 2013. Originally, from Maine, near the Northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, she has over 20 years of experience working with rural and urbanizing communities to implement appropriate development initiatives in the fields of community development, transportation, emergency management, and economic development. She leads the Planning, Transit, and Transportation Divisions in personnel, budget, partnerships, and project development and management. Erica is a Returned Peace Corps Morocco Volunteer and holds a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech University and B.S. from Colorado State University.

Presentation Outline:

Discussion of current economic and workforce conditions in the greater Asheville area and WNC. Presentation will include trends and sector growth opportunities, as well as challenges facing our workforce and business community. Please bring questions and discussion!

March 7 & 9, 2023

Atalaya Dorfield – African American Experience in the National Parks

March 14, 2023 *(Cullowhee campus ONLY)*

Lisa Hillmann, MS, RD, LD – The Nutrition of Longevity and an Overview of Nutritional Genomics

Biography:

Lisa Hillmann is a registered dietitian and masters-trained genetic counselor, specializing in nutrigenomic testing. In her private practice, Nutrition Decode, she combines expansive genetic analysis and nutrition counseling to provide highly personalized care that supports her clients in

overcoming their immediate health challenges.

Presentation Outline:

The first half of the presentation will review tips and insight about how nutrition can be a powerful driver of good health and longevity. After the break, we will explore what nutrigenomics is and how it can provide knowledge to improve health. More information can be found at her website, www.NutritionDecode.com.

March 21, 2023 (*Cullowhee campus ONLY*)

Dr. Todd Collins – Power, Policy, and Politics: How the U.S. Supreme Court Works

Biography:

Dr. Todd Collins is the Steed Distinguished Professor and Department Head for the Political Science and Public Affairs Department at Western Carolina University. Holding a law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Georgia, Dr. Collins is an award-winning teacher and scholar. His research includes publications on the behavior of judges, the role of attorneys, and media coverage of the Supreme Court. He can be found on the WCU campus teaching classes in constitutional law, judicial politics, working with pre-law students, and occasionally shooting three-pointers in Reid Gymnasium.

Presentation Outline:

This talk will examine how the US Supreme Court works, with an emphasis on recent cases, the appointment process, personnel changes, and the role of the High Court in our judicial and political system.

March 28 & 30, 2023

Brenda Mills – Equity and Inclusion

April 5, 2023

Luncheon at Lake Junaluska

Harrell Center, Room 105

Note to the membership:

The above are the topics and speakers selected by the Curriculum Committee. This may change based on speaker availability.