LIFE@ WESTERN CAROLINA

Spring 2024 Schedule

Cullowhee, Main Campus (Wednesdays, 10am – 12pm)

January 17, 2024

Dr. Casey Hurley – Developing an Educational Philosophy

Biography:

I attended K-12 Catholic schools in Appleton, Wisconsin, and graduated from St. Norbert College in 1974. I taught English at my old HS for three years.

I earned a Masters in Educational Administration at UW-Madison and became an administrator in four different Wisconsin high schools from 1978-1988. My doctorate was granted in 1989, and I became a professor at WCU that fall.

I wrote "The Six Virtues of the Educated Person" in 2009. I realized people like to read stories more than philosophy, so I wrote "Improving Instruction: Best Practices Told Through Teacher Stories" in 2021. This second book gives voice to the creativity of K-12 teachers.

Presentation Outline:

This presentation will be a discussion among attendees.

-I will be asking questions triggered by the slides, which are quotations from several authors.

-The main questions driving the discussion from beginning to end are the following:

- Which of the two philosophies do you favor (egalitarianism or elitism)?
- If the answer is "blowing in the wind," what does that mean?
- If Americans are mean, today, when were they not mean? (This audience has a lot of history.)
- What can we do to get past our current divisions?

January 24, 2024

Dr. Wes Milner – The Middle East

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, 2024

Gayle Woody – The Blue Ridge Craft Trails

Biography:

Born in Wheaton, Illinois in 1951. Graduated from Wheaton Central High School in 1970 Graduated with a BA in Art Education from Seattle Pacific University in 1974. Married Phillip Woody in 1975, 4 children, 12 grandchildren. Taught school at Almond School in Swain County 1974-1977. Worked for Jackson County Department of Public Health - 1991-2002 – Health Education Specialist. Visual Arts Teacher - 2003-2016 retired from Smoky Mountain High School – 2016. Studio Artist – 2016 to present

Art in permanent exhibits

1) Clay tiles of native plants and traditional quilt squares – 2011 – Jackson County Public Library
2) Linoleum Block Prints printed on handmade wasp nest paper – series of 4 native animals – Appalachian Regional Commission Office – Washington, DC, January, 2024
3) Linoleum Block Prints printed on handmade wasp nest paper – series of 4 native animals – Tsali Care Center – Cherokee, NC, April, 2024

Art Work on Display

1) Twigs and Leaves Gallery – Waynesville, North Carolina
2) Dogwood Crafters – Dillsboro, North Carolina

Both are Members of the Blue Ridge Craft Trails

Presentation Outline:

Introduction
Studio Artist
Block Printing
Book Arts
Blue Ridge Craft Trails
Questions and answers

February 7, 2024

Dr. Jeffrey Vickery – Christian Nationalism is Not Christian

Biography:

Since 2002 Jeffrey Vickery has served as co-pastor of Cullowhee Baptist Church alongside Rev. Tonya Vickery. For more than 20 years, he has taught as an adjunct professor in the WCU Department of Philosophy and Religion. He has presented numerous times to the LIFE@WCU group on topics related to topics of interest related to Abrahamic faith traditions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Whenever he's not preaching or teaching, he's a proud father to two fabulous and talented adult daughters, both WCU graduates. Just for fun he loves to be on a trail going as far as possible, and then back again, before the sun goes down. In short, he loves living in Cullowhee, NC.

Presentation Outline:

Christian Nationalism is neither Christian nor good for American democracy. Yet recent political and religious voices have sounded a new call for Christian nationalism while not even trying to hide their goals of giving Christianity priority and superiority in American culture and politics. We will discuss some of the historical language that feeds Christian nationalism and consider what the implications are for the First Amendment, religious minorities in America, faith and politics, and Christianity and culture.

February 14, 2024

Dr. Kevan Frazier-The Asheville Renaissance (1980-2015): The Rebirth of Downtown

Biography:

Kevan was born in Asheville and raised in Candler. His parents Donna and Nelson Frazier both worked for the telephone company Southern Bell. Donna was a telephone operator. Nelson was a lineman and later a manager. They raised him to always be kind and respectful of others, and to find ways to help others. Kevan pursued a career in education because through education people can discover themselves, learn about what interests them, and make meaningful contributions to the world.

Kevan is the Executive Director for Western Carolina University's Programs in Asheville located at Biltmore Park. He loves helping establish and expand educational offerings that enable people to pursue their dreams. Kevan is also deeply involved in Community Development and Economic Development, with a focus on bringing high-paying jobs to Asheville. Prior to WCU, Kevan was a member of the History faculty and an administrator at UNC Asheville. One of Kevan's favorite jobs was running the University's freshman orientation program—working directly with incoming students. Kevan graduated from UNC Asheville, Kent State in Ohio, and West Virginia University. He earned a PhD in History with a double focus on American History and Pre-Colonial African History. Kevan's dissertation was on Urban Appalachia.

Presentation Outline:

We will take a look at how Asheville, after near collapse as a result of Depression era-debt and suburbanization, reemerged as one of the nation's leaders in downtown revitalization and where things are today post-Renaissance.

February 21, 2024

Dr. Dan Pierce – History of the Railroad in Western NC

Biography:

Daniel S. (Dan) Pierce is the author of Tarheel Lightnin': How Secret Stills and Fast Cars Made North Carolina the Moonshine Capital of the World (UNC Press, October 2019), The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park (UT Press, 2000), Corn From a Jar: Moonshining in the Great Smoky Mountains (Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2013), Hazel Creek: The Life and Death of an Iconic Mountain Community (Great Smoky Mountains Association, March 2017) and the first truly comprehensive history of early NASCAR, Real NASCAR: White Lightning, Red Clay, and Big Bill France (UNC Press, 2010). He has also recently collaborated with renowned Nashville, Tennessee poster artist Joel Anderson to produce the Illustrated Guide to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Illustrated Guide to Exploring the Grand Circle: Utah and Arizona.

Presentation Outline:

This talk will explore the construction of the Western North Carolina Railroad in the 1870s and 1880s, in particular the use of convict labor and the horrors that attended this massive construction project. It will also discuss recent efforts to memorialize the lives, and deaths, of the laborers who were so key to connecting Western North Carolina to the outside world in the late 19th century.

February 28, 2024

Francis Owl-Smith – Quilts of Life and Eco Printing from the Cherokee Perspective

Biography:

As early as I can remember, I have always been around people who crafted. My maternal grandmother and my mother made homemade quilts and garments for our family. My father worked at the first factory in Cherokee, NC called "The Cherokees". It predominantly made leather moccasins but also other craft items for sale in the tourist's industry. My brothers and I helped in this endeavor at night by beading patterns into the top of the leather moccasins. This was our source of a small personal income when we were children. So I've naturally always worked with creating handcrafted items and proudly consider it a positive aspect in my life. After getting married right after high-school and starting a family, I became a nontraditional student at Western Carolina University where I received my BS degree in 1983 and subsequently entered UNC School of Medicine and later a Residency in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology. This educational journey lasted nine years and I continued to find little bits of time to craft in various ways. Now that I'm retired, I can spend more free time to learn new techniques. Most recently I have learned more about natural dyeing and botanical printing on fiber as well as my long-time love of quilting.

I have 3 children and 3 wonderful grandchildren that are the greatest joy in my life. I love to travel. I am a past President of the WCU Alumni Board, the physician representative to Cherokee Indian Hospital Governing Board, a member of the Qualla Arts and Crafts Cooperative, and an active member of the Cherokee Quilters Guild. I belong to numerous Facebook art groups that keep me stimulated and interested in different types of media. I believe that having an interest in arts and crafts can help an individual stay active and healthier in the aging process.

March 6, 2024

Sarah Steiner – Shifting Understandings of Gender and Sexuality

Biography:

Sarah Steiner is a librarian at WCU, and she has been a part of the campus community since 2014. She grew up in the Florida Everglades and worked at Georgia State University Library in Atlanta for nine years, prior to moving to Cullowhee. Her areas of research interest include inclusive archiving, personnel management skills, and workplace culture. She is the co-founder of the LGBTQIA+ Archive project at WCU and is one of the founding members of Sylva Pride. She lives with her husband and daughter in Cullowhee and is bisexual.

Presentation Outline:

Have you noticed conversations about gender or sexuality are changing… and quickly? If yes, you aren't alone. Please join us for an open and friendly intergenerational conversation with WCU students and employees on these topics. Have questions? Please bring them! The panelists will share their experiences and respond to your queries. The session will conclude with practical tips for your future conversations with your friends and family.

March 13, 2024

Drake Fowler – NC Arboretum

Biography:

Drake Fowler serves as the Deputy Executive Director of The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, an affiliate institution of The University of North Carolina System. His leadership includes functioning as the Arboretum's Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer and elected president of the Arboretum's supporting non-profit organization.

During Drake's nine years at the Arboretum, he has managed the Arboretum's annual operating budget, currently $10 million, that includes public and private funding. A special interest has been institutional strategy, execution of over $5 million in capital funding for new and major renovation projects and building effectiveness and teamwork in daily operations. Drake employed his long international experience as a licensed landscape architect in co-leading development of the Arboretums 20-year master plan, setting the future vision for the Arboretum's ecologically complex and highly utilized 435 acres that consist of federal, state and private ownership. In leading private support efforts, he has rebuilt the development program and expanded private support through donor relations and 18,000 member households.

Presentation Outline:

What is an Arboretum, and what is its purpose? The North Carolina Arboretum is truly unique because of its physical location. Still, it is also unique in how it is organized as an affiliate of the North Carolina University System. In this talk Drake Fowler, the Deputy Executive Director and Landscape Architect will walk students through The North Carolina Arboretum's rich history and design ethos. This talk will walk students through the visually dazzling world at the Arboretum and highlight the institution greatest competitive advantage, creativity.

March 20, 2024

Dr. Carol Burton & Dr. Amber Albert-Bells in the Valley: Life and Regional Impact at WCU

Dr. Burton – Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Dr. Albert – Director, Mountain Heritage Center

Biography:

Dr. Amber Clawson Albert is the Director of the Mountain Heritage Center (MHC) at WCU. Prior to her arrival in March, 2023, Dr. Albert was the manager of Community and Academic Learning at Reynolda House Museum of American Art at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. Her other professional experiences include the Historical Association of Catawba County, where she was executive director, and Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Center for Historic Preservation. She earned a doctoral degree in public history from MTSU, a master's degree in history from the College of Charleston, and a bachelor's degree in public relations from Appalachian State University. Her qualifications and professional experiences in historic preservation and historic site management complement her role at the MHC, which was created in 1975 to research and celebrate Southern Appalachia's cultural heritage and history. She grew up in Boone, NC.

Dr. Carol Burton is Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. A two-time alumna of WCU, Dr. Burton oversees the Mountain Heritage Center, Community Engagement and Service Learning, Career and Professional Development, and Institutional Assessment, as well as administers the Liberal Studies Program, among other duties. A British native born in London to Jamaican parents, she has been employed by WCU since 1989, following six years as a student pursuing an undergraduate degree in nutrition/dietetics, and a master's degree in community counseling. Dr. Burton earned her doctorate in higher education and adult learning from NC State University in 2007, although she is a catamount at heart!

Presentation Outline:

Western Carolina University's founding in 1889 began a long history of reciprocity with the region. We will share the history, regional impact, and current status of WCU. An engaging activity with artifacts will follow a brief retrospective video about WCU. Please come curious about how our local community, WCU, and the region have changed over the past 135 years!

March 27, 2024

Dr. Chunyan Wang – Tea and Relations with China

Biography:

Dr. C.Y. Wang serves as a Professor of Human Nutrition and the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences at Western Carolina University. Previously, he served as the Associate Dean of Research and Extension for the College of Education and Human Sciences (EHS), Assistant Director of South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station (SDAES), South Dakota State University (SDSU). He served as Head at the Department of Nutrition, Food Science and Hospitality at SDSU for 9 years. He also served as the Interim Director of SDSU Technology Transfer Office, the Acting Dean of Family and Consumer Sciences, as well as Interim Associate Dean and Interim Associate Director of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agricultural and Biological Sciences. He once was the Founding Coordinator of the SDSU Agriculture Value-Added Research (AVAR) Program. Besides being an administrator with diverse experience, he is an accomplished scientist with active research

program in chemistry, processing and potential health benefits of phytochemicals, and more recently in genomics, proteomics and metabolomics. He also teaches a variety of Food Science and Human Nutrition courses, including Food Chemistry, Food Analysis, Advanced Food Processing, and Phytochemicals. Dr. Wang obtained both his M.S. and Ph.D. from Iowa State University. Dr. Wang won many awards, including the Regent Award for Excellence in Research by the South Dakota Board of Regents. Dr. Wang grew up in China and is a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Presentation Outline:

History of tea consumption

1. Tea Chemistry
2. Tea and Health
3. Production and Processing of Tea
4. Tea Politics
5. Culture and Tea Tasting Demonstration
6. Conversation on Geopolitical Issues on China

April 3, 2024

Luncheon

Note to the membership:

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