

LIFE@ WESTERN CAROLINA

2017 Fall Schedule – Biltmore Park Classes

Thursdays

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

09/14/2017

Brian Byrd, “Mosquito Research”

Brian Byrd, associate professor of environmental health sciences at Western Carolina University and supervisor of the Mosquito and Vector-Borne Infection Disease Facility in WCU’s School of Health Sciences, will provide expert commentary on regional health concerns. This will include the prevalence of La Crosse encephalitis in North Carolina, especially in the western counties which directly impacts our community. Byrd received his bachelor’s degree in biology at UNC-Asheville before traveling to south of New Orleans, where he earned his masters of science degree in public health and his doctorate in parasitology at Tulane University. He was influenced by mosquito genetics as well as diseases that carry the West Nile virus.

09/21/2017

Pam Duncan, Local Author

Novelist Pamela Duncan was born in Asheville and grew up in Black Mountain, Swannanoa, and Shelby, North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in journalism from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.A. in English/Creative Writing from North Carolina State University in Raleigh. She lives in Cullowhee, North Carolina and teaches creative writing at Western Carolina University.

Her first novel, *Moon Women*, was a Southeastern Booksellers Association (now Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance) Award Finalist, and her second novel, *Plant Life*, won the 2003 Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction. She is the recipient of the 2007 James Still Award for Writing about the Appalachian South, awarded by the Fellowship of Southern Writers. Her third novel, *The Big Beautiful*, was published in March 2007.

09/28/2017

Garrett Artz, “Riverlink”

Garrett is the Executive Director of RiverLink. He is a native of a rural town in Pennsylvania and brings a diverse set of experiences to RiverLink, as well as experiences as a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. After graduating from law school and moving to Asheville, he co-founded a walking and biking advocacy group, Connect Enka, in Enka-Candler working to make the area along Hominy Creek and Enka Commerce Center friendly to people who want to bike or walk safely. He continues to be active in the community and is a member of the Mountain Area Volunteer Lawyers, Pro Bono Committee Chair for the local bar, and is a League Cycling Instructor.

10/05/2017

Enrique Gomez, “Astronomy”

Dr. Gomez is an assistant professor of Chemistry and Physics at Western Carolina and has previously instructed at Birmingham-Southern College. He earned his Ph. D at the University of Alabama. He is the president of the Jackson County NAACP and while teaching he strives to integrate elements from non-Western and non-European teachings into his classes.

10/12/2017

Mary Ella Engel, “Slavery in Appalachia”

Dr. Engel earned her Ph.D. from the University of Georgia in 2009. Her dissertation, which deals with the intersection of religion, family, and violence in 19th century Appalachian Georgia, is currently under revision for publication. Two essays, drawn from her dissertation research, will appear soon in anthologies titled: *The Riff-Raff of Civilization: Appalachians and Violence* and *Echoes of War: The Civil War's Aftermath in Appalachia*.

10/19/2017

Amy Rose/Kareena Cooper-Duffy, “Botswana Education Connection”

Amy Rose joined the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at WCU as an Assistant Professor in the fall of 2014. She teaches introduction to Communication Sciences and Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Voice Disorders. Her research interests include social skills and friendship development in individuals with disabilities. She is also interested in the provision of training activities for speech language pathologists, teachers, and special educators in developing countries with recent experiences in China and Botswana.

Dr. Karena Cooper-Duffy is a Full Professor in the Special Education program at Western Carolina University. She has been teaching at the university for 18 years and specializes in teaching students with significant intellectual disabilities. Karena has been providing professional development opportunities for K 12 special education teachers for over 23 years.. She was the director of a community based school for people with severe disabilities. She provided professional development for special education teachers of the school and local community. Her research areas include teaching students with severe disabilities, community based instruction, collaboration with families and supporting special education teachers.

10/26/2017

David Westling/Kelly Kelley, “University Participant Program”

Both Drs. Westling and Kelley strive to make easy-going and accessible transitions to all students, but especially those who have intellectual disabilities. They preside as co-directors of WCU’s University Participant program. The WCU UP Program provides an inclusive, two-year, on-campus living and learning experience for college-aged persons with intellectual disabilities. The goal of the program is to facilitate UP students' transition from secondary school to adult life with education, employment and independent living. Up.wcu.edu

Dr. David Westling received his Ed.D in Special Education at the University of Florida. His research interests include inclusive post-secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities and its impact on campus life. Westling is an *Adelaide Worth Daniels Distinguished Professor of Special Education* at Western Carolina University.

Dr. Kelley, an alumna of Western Carolina University received her BSEd and MAEd in Special Education and received her PhD in Special Education at UNC-Charlotte. Her research interests include secondary transition related to assistive technology, independent living, and inclusive postsecondary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Kelley is a current professor in WCU's School of Teaching and Learning.

11/02/2017

Chris Cooper, "American Politics"

Chris Cooper is professor and department head in Political Science and Public Affairs and Professor (by courtesy) of Psychology. He is the recipient of the WCU's highest honors in research (University Scholar) and teaching (Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence). He was also named NC Professor of the Year in 2013 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. His research addressing campaigns and elections, state politics, political psychology, and southern politics has appeared in over 40 journal articles and book chapters. He is also a frequently sought after media source and has been quoted by NPR, the Washington Post, New York Times, Raleigh News and Observer, Asheville Citizen Times, and many other outlets.

11/09/2017

David Whitehill, "Asheville Symphony"

David Whitehill was appointed executive director of the Asheville Symphony in October 2012. His decision to take this appointment certainly had a lot to do with the symphony, but just as important was Asheville as a location for his family. Before Asheville, Whitehill was executive director of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra in Maine. He has worked with Woody Allen, Drummers of Burundi, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and pop acts such as Linda Ronstadt, Jose Feliciano and the Righteous Brothers.

Whitehill worked in an administrative capacity with orchestras in California for more than 10 years before joining the BSO, including Orange County's Pacific Symphony, the Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Laguna Beach Music Festival and the Chapman University School of Music, from which he received a bachelor's degree in performance and orchestral conducting, and instrumental education.

11/16/2017

Lisa Briggs "Cadaver Dogs"

Dr. Lisa Briggs is a professor of criminology and criminal justice at Western Carolina University. She has been recognized as being one of the top educators in the state of North Carolina and has a dedication to serving the community. She is also the author of over 30 academic publications and she is committed to working with her three-year-old HRD K9 who has cleared 8 cases by finding human remains.

Mr. Edwin Grant has 29 years of law-enforcement and K9 search experience. He is an expert witness in grave detection and analysis as well as water search and recovery. Edwin has also worked K9 search and recovery for 9/11 and major hurricanes throughout the country. He currently serves a police K9 handler and trainer for county law enforcement.

11/30/2017

Richard Kort, “Elder Law: What are the Protections?”

Kort earned his B.B.A at Emory University in 1987 and his J.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1991. He is the former president of the Western North Carolina Jewish Federation and is a former board member for the Health Adventure, Asheville. He is also involved in the Mountain Area chapter of the American Red Cross and McAuley Foundation.

12/07/2017

Christmas Reception at WCU-Biltmore Park