

A. The Alumnae Lyceum: Reflections on the Past and Present

Multi-professor course

Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Norris University Center

Following the 19th century American Lyceum tradition for public education, the Alumnae Continuing Education program is offering a nine-week eclectic lecture series on a range of engaging topics. Several of the lectures will explore historic events from the past which continue to resonate into today's social and political discourse. Other classes will provide perspectives and analyses on topics of timely public interest, focusing on political, cultural, and economic issues, both national and global. The course will feature outstanding faculty from various schools and departments within the university.

Sep. 24 Update on the War in Ukraine

William Reno, *Professor, Political Science*

This presentation will examine the current state of the war in Ukraine, where it may be headed, the challenges each side faces, and whether this year could see important turning points in this war. Professor Reno reflects on the realities of these developments from the perspective of forward observations from repeated visits to Ukraine over the past two years.

Oct. 1 Election Law in 2024

Michael Kang, *Class of 1940 Professor of Law; Pritzker School of Law*

Professor Kang is a nationally recognized expert on campaign finance, voting rights, redistricting, judicial elections, and corporate governance. This lecture will examine the evolution of election law over the years and what's going on in this year's continued landscape of hyperpartisan politics.

Oct. 8 Does a Presidential Inaugural Address Really Matter?

David Zarefsky, *Owen L. Coon Professor Emeritus of Argumentation and Debate*

The Constitution doesn't require the President to deliver an Inaugural Address, but George Washington started the tradition, and it is now firmly established. What was Washington up to? What purposes does this speech serve? Are there major differences between a First and Second Inaugural Address? Which Inaugural is the best? Does even the best make a difference? These are some of the questions we will consider in anticipation of the Inaugural Address to be delivered on January 20, 2025.

Oct. 15 **“Happy Days Are Here Again”: Campaign Songs and the Music of Elections**

Stephen Alltop, *Senior Lecturer, Bienen School of Music*

Professor Stephen Alltop offers a look back at the songs and music of election campaigns over the past 150 years. From “Battle Cry of Freedom” to “The Candidate’s a Dodger,” music has been an integral part of politics and persuasion.

Oct. 22 **A Primer on Book Burning and Book Banning**

Jeff Garrett, *Librarian emeritus, NU Library Administration*

Throughout history, destroying books has never been about ridding the world of the physical object. Instead, it is a heavily symbolic act, a surrogate execution of author and of others who share that author’s beliefs. “The book is the double of the man,” writes Lucien Polastron, “and burning it is the equivalent of killing him. And sometimes one does not occur without the other.” Today, when books are available in thousands or millions of copies, they are preferentially banned rather than burned. In this lecture, we will discuss the burning and banning of books since ancient times, but of course dwell longer on the present. The goal will be to understand what the forced removal of books means, for authors and readers, but above all for the societies in which these acts take place.

Oct. 29 **The U.S. and the Holocaust**

Peter Hayes, *Emeritus Professor of History and German, Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies*

The American response to Nazi persecution of the Jews, first in Germany and then in most of Europe, brings to mind Winston Churchill’s famous evaluation of democracy as the worst system of government except for every other one. Before World War II, the U.S. admitted more Jewish refugees than any other nation on the globe, but left many more would-be entrants to their fates; after the war began, the U.S. tried harder than other belligerents to aid Jews, but belatedly and halfheartedly. Professor Hayes will examine the principal causes of this pattern and address its relevance to the contemporary surge of antisemitism in America.

Nov. 5 **NO CLASS – Election Day**

Nov. 12 **Artificial Intelligence and the Future of the U.S. Economy**
Sergio Rebelo, *MUFG Professor of International Finance,*
Kellogg School of Management

Over the past decade, declining computing costs and the availability of vast data sets allowed neural networks to excel in tasks ranging from image recognition to language understanding, translation, and content generation. While AI promises to deliver large social benefits, it also poses risks, including large job displacements, fueling political polarization, facilitating fraud, weakening democracies, and manipulating individuals to act against their self-interest. We will explore AI's promise and potential dangers and discuss regulatory measures that can harness the benefits of this technology while mitigating social costs.

Nov.19 **Update on Religion, Politics, and America's Role in the War in Gaza/Israel**
Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Professor, Political Science,*
Professor and Chair, Religious Studies

This lecture will discuss how a scholar of religion, politics, and US foreign policy views the war in Gaza and Israel. Topics will include the politics of antisemitism, the history of Zionism, Palestinian history and politics, and why so many Americans experienced the conflict personally despite being physically distant from the violence.

Nov. 26 **Population Collapse and European History**
Scott Sowerby, *Associate Professor, History*

Due to decreasing fertility and restrictions on immigration, the population of many European countries has been shrinking: current projections suggest that the European population will peak in 2026 and then begin a slow decline, with major consequences for economic growth and social welfare. This lecture looks back at two previous periods of decline in European population: the Black Death of the 14th century and the Little Ice Age of the 17th century. Both of these shifts had surprisingly positive effects for European peasants and townspeople, whose labor became more valuable as workers became scarce. There is even some evidence that the Little Ice Age, by empowering ordinary Europeans, helped to provoke the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.