

**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. The lectures will provide perspectives and analyses on topics of historical as well as timely public interest. A number of lectures focus on political, economic, environmental, and legal issues, both national and global, while other lectures will explore updates in the fields of health and medicine. The course will feature outstanding faculty from various schools and departments within the university.

**Sep. 16                    Tectonic Shifts in the Global Economic Landscape**  
*Stephen Nelson, Associate Professor, Political Science*

The rules-based international economic order has fractured. To better understand the economic earthquake and its aftershocks, this lecture follows two tracks. First, I will identify some key reasons for the turn against globalization. Second, I will try to map the global economic terrain in the wake of the current assault on the foundations of globalization.

**Sep. 23                    NO CLASS - Rosh Hashanah**

**Sep. 30                    Flirting with Imperialism**  
*David Zarefsky, Owen L. Coon Professor Emeritus of  
 Argumentation and Debate; Former Dean of the School  
 of Communication*

While the 19th century found many countries acquiring colonies and building empires, the United States saw territorial expansion differently: as a path to the formation of new states on terms of equality with the old. But by the 1890s, the U.S. seriously considered becoming an imperial power with regard to Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, for instance. In an intense national controversy, Indiana's Albert J. Beveridge called for imperialism while William Jennings Bryan spoke out in opposition. The belief that holding colonies was both a sign and a responsibility of a great power, as well as a source of economic gain, enjoyed a brief heyday, but by the mid-20th century each of the U.S. possessions was on the path to commonwealth status, statehood, or independence. After World War II, most of the world renounced imperialism. But the rhetoric of imperialism is not quite dead; traces can be found in the 2025 Presidential Inaugural Address. This lecture will examine these trajectories and their implications.

**Oct. 7                      Deciphering the Recent Changes in U.S. Global Strategy**  
*William Reno, Professor and Chair, Political Science; Joint Appointment with the Program of African Studies*

Does the United States have a grand strategic vision? The first months of the new administration have seen many measures aimed at China, a rising superpower that has ended the post-Cold War era of unchallenged U.S. global dominance. But the emerging reality may not be so simple. This presentation outlines the emerging elements of a new grand strategy amidst increased global competition and assesses it alongside established strategic thinking – an exercise that points to the risks and the rewards of this administration’s approach to global affairs and helps to anticipate what comes next.

**Oct. 14                      Ireland and the American Revolution**  
*Scott Sowerby, Associate Professor, History*

In this lecture, Professor Sowerby tells a tale of archival manuscript research in three countries on two continents that yielded a surprising set of results. In the summer of 1775, British administrators were desperate to get more Irish Catholics to enlist in the British army to go fight the rebellious American colonists. But Catholic worship was still formally banned both in Ireland and in the army. A sort of eighteenth-century version of “don’t ask, don’t tell” emerged, where Catholics were being recruited in large numbers as soldiers, while their recruitment was not openly acknowledged by army officers. This talk puts this odd episode in the context of the wider ideological struggles being waged in 1775 in both Ireland and America, with both places poised on the brink of different sorts of revolutions.

**Oct. 21                      Current Threats to Knowledge Production  
in the United States**  
*Heidi Kitrosser, William W. Gurley Professor of Law,  
Pritzker School of Law*

There are many institutions, both public and private, on which Americans long have relied for evidence-based, expertise-driven information and analysis. Such institutions include universities, press outlets, and public agencies devoted to science, economics, and other disciplines. Increasingly, however, these institutions face threats from legal, political, and economic forces. This lecture will focus on some of these threats, including state and federal efforts to micro-manage university classroom instruction, private lawsuits by the U.S. President against news organizations, federal regulatory actions against broadcast media, and executive and judicial developments that threaten the independence of the federal civil service.

**Oct. 28                    Public Health Challenges in an Era of Misinformation**

*Dr. John P. Flaherty, Professor of Medicine  
(Infectious Disease) and Medical Education*

This lecture will review emerging and re-emerging infectious disease threats and the impact of vaccine hesitancy, rejection of public health measures, the promotion of unproven treatments and defunding infectious diseases research.

**Nov. 4                    Measuring Biological Age in Humans: Navigating the  
Journey to Health Span Extension**

*Dr. Douglas Vaughan, Irving S. Cutter Professor of  
Medicine Emeritus (Cardiology); Director, Potocsnak  
Longevity Institute*

For the first time in human history, we have the opportunity to shift the medical paradigm from reactive treatment of disease to proactive extension of health span. We now possess the tools to quantify biological age in real time using advanced molecular profiling and novel AI-powered measures such as ECG-age and retinal imaging. Built to accommodate standardized protocols, harmonize data capture, and promote multisite implementation, the Human Longevity Laboratory at Northwestern provides a future-ready infrastructure to test a wide range of interventions that may impact the trajectory of aging. This includes not only pharmacologic therapies, but also lifestyle modifications, dietary regimens, supplements, and integrative approaches. Moreover, it offers a unique opportunity to validate – or refute – widely used public health interventions and economic consumer products that claim to extend lifespan – or enhance vitality. In this way, the Northwestern Human Longevity Laboratory of the Potocsnak Longevity Institute establishes a long-term testing platform for transformative health span research, delivering robust, evidence-based answers to some of the most pressing questions in aging and longevity science.

**Nov. 11                      Poison Fruit: The Rise of the California Strawberry and America's Toxic Farm System**

*Shana Bernstein, Clinical Associate, Legal Studies and American Studies*

This lecture will explore the history of agricultural regulation through the lens of the production and marketing of the California strawberry, the most toxic produce item and, as a year-round staple of the American fruit industry, one of the biggest beneficiaries of capitalist-driven agricultural policies. It will chronicle how legislation has failed – and still fails - to protect consumers, farmworkers, and the environment. It will tell the stories of the reformers who since the 1960s have attempted to alert the rest of us to the dangers of chemical agriculture – the environmentalists and scientists, the occasional farm owner, and most centrally, the farmworkers whose frontline experiences with agricultural toxins has made them the canaries in the coal mines.

**Nov. 18                      The Paths Out of Town: Trash in the Twentieth-Century United States**

*Keith Woodhouse, Associate Professor, History*

This lecture will consider what American municipalities did with city dwellers' trash in the mid and late-twentieth century. It will focus particularly on Philadelphia and New York. Both cities experimented with various strategies for storing and disposing of trash, but Philadelphia, in particular, invested in moving trash far away while New York piled up trash within city limits. Ultimately, the lecture will reckon with the fact that trash does not go away; it only changes in form and meaning.