

**A. THE ALUMNAE LYCEUM LECTURE SERIES:
REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST AND PRESENT**

Multi-professor Course

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

ATTN: The 9/29 class will be held in Scott Hall - SEE INSERT

Following the 19th century American tradition for public education, this course is an eclectic series that will address current and historical perspectives on the global order, specifically issues relating to war, imperialism, the rise of China, Syria after Assad, the world economy, and export control policymaking. It will also examine the importance of public history for a democratic society, as well as controversies concerning solar energy in the California desert. Finally, the series will end with a look at how Shakespeare's dramatic depictions of tyrants continue to resonate in today's world. Featured are outstanding faculty from various schools and departments within the university.

Sep. 29 War and the New Global Order

William Reno, *Professor and Chair, Political Science; Joint Appointment with the Program of African Studies*

Wars both reflect shifts in the balance of power and accelerate the transformation of international systems. Now, after decades of US global supremacy, this balance of power is shifting toward a messy era of multipolar power politics. Three-quarters of great power transitions in the past 500 years involved highly destructive wars. Nuclear weapons and expanded domains of warfare—space, cyber, and cognitive—and the rapid development of powerful dual-use technologies such as AI accompany the current shift in the balance of power, with important impacts on warfare and its relationship to international order. This lecture also is about understanding the long-term implications of recent political and military choices in the US.

Oct. 6 Syria After Assad

Wendy Pearlman, *Jane Long Professor of Arts and Sciences; Professor, Political Science*

In December 2024, an astonishing 11-day rebel offensive in Syria accomplished what most outside observers and stunned locals believed to be impossible: the overthrow of the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. After 54 years of brutal dictatorship and 14 years of merciless war, Syrians entered a new state of political possibility. How did Syria get here? How can we understand events and developments since Assad's fall? What challenges and opportunities lie ahead? Professor Wendy Pearlman explores these questions, pulling on interviews that she has conducted with more than 500 displaced Syrians around the world since 2012, as well as her own recent trips to Syria.

Oct. 13 China's Global Rise: Leading Through Multilateralism?

Karen Alter, *Norman Dwight Harris Professor of International Relations;
Professor of Political Science and Law (courtesy)*

This talk will focus on China's rise as a global power. During the upheaval of General Mao, China maintained an isolationist world view. After Mao's death, modern China began to engage the world but as a developing country focused on itself. For decades, China sat on the sidelines of global debate, figuring out its leadership role. Today the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) cares most about controlling its leadership on its domestic homefront while also creating an international order safe for autocracy. Prof. Alter will explore how China, through the lens of its own history, its massive Belt and Road Initiative, and an aspiration for peaceful coexistence and multilateralism is facing its ascendant moment in global political and economic history.

Oct. 20 Flirting with Imperialism

David Zarefsky, *Owen L. Coon Professor Emeritus of Argumentation and
Debate; Former Dean, 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. The lecture will examine these trajectories and their implications.
(This lecture was originally scheduled for the Fall 2025 Lyceum course).

Oct. 27 Who Controls the Past? Museum Exhibitions and the Battle Over History

Daniel Greene, *Adjunct Professor, History*

Museums, monuments, and historic sites present opportunities for the public to learn about the past. But they also sometimes become locations of political conflict, as tensions about the ways that Americans choose to commemorate historic events amplify partisan tensions. This class session will recount multiple recent controversies over how history is presented in public spaces in the United States. We'll ask questions including: *Who gets to decide how to present the past in public? Why do debates about remembering the past lead to such heated political disagreement?*

Nov. 3 What is Going on in the World Economy?

Sergio Rebelo, *MUFG Bank Distinguished Professor of International Finance,
Faculty Director, EMBA Program, Kellogg School of Management*

In this lecture, Professor Rebelo will discuss the rise of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on productivity and the labor market, the trend towards deglobalization, the defense build-up, the state of bond and equity markets, and the prospect for a space economy.

Nov. 10 Export Controls and Economic Security: What is Going On?
Karen Alter, *Norman Dwight Harris Professor of International Relations;*
Professor of Political Science and Law (courtesy)

Professor Alter's current book project based on her past work with the Bureau of International Security (BIS) provides an intensive review and study of U.S. export control policy. The world of export controls is extremely complicated and opaque, existing within a range of multilateral strategies. In this class, she will explore the effectiveness of export controls, historically and currently, as well as how U.S. politics is influenced by a unique security subculture. She will also develop a policy recommendation for how to update the U.S. export control system for the set of challenges the U.S. and the world face today.

Nov. 17 The View from Nowhere: What Changing Uses of the California Desert Can Tell Us About the Recent Past
Keith Woodhouse, *Associate Professor, History*

This talk will describe shifting uses and perceptions of the California desert, a place Euro-American settlers long considered empty and unproductive. It will touch on mining, military installations, rights-of-way for railroads and transmission lines, and a variety of recreational activities, and end with the desert as a bonanza of solar energy. It will discuss how different uses and claims to the desert have increasingly collided in the hottest and driest place in the nation.

Nov. 24 Light is the Head that Wears the Crown: Shakespeare's Tyrants, Then and Now
Glenn Sucich, *Associate Professor of Instruction, English*

Shakespeare's plays provide us with some of the richest villains in English literature, many of whom were kings. For these nefarious rulers, the desire for power and personal gain led to oppressive practices that transformed each of them from a king into, as a character in MacBeth says, a "tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues." This talk will explore the political and personal dimensions of Shakespeare's tyrants. What character traits and behaviors distinguished a benevolent monarch from a tyrant? What motivated and enabled tyrants to emerge? Finally, what might Shakespeare's depiction of despotic leaders teach us about our own political discourse?

NOTE: *The professor advises that Shakespeare is best enjoyed and understood by viewing performances of his plays. A supplement of suggested film versions of the dramas being discussed will be available on the course website. Previewing is optional, but doing so will enhance your lecture experience.*

To access the material, go to our website: **NUalumnaecourses.org**

- Under Course A, click on the Learn More button.
- Then click on the Course Materials button, which will take you to a list of the suggested films.