
SCHOLAR ADVENTURERS SERIES: Fall 2021

Each SAS must be registered for prior to the program. For the SAS programs including food (indicated by *), please register early and be sure to notify us if your plans change so that we will know how much to order. To receive credit for any virtual SAS, students must submit a paragraph response to a prompt after the program attended.

***1. eXtreme Gravity – UNVEILING THE HIDDEN UNIVERSE**

Nicolas Yunes, Professor, Engineering Physics

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

Location TBD

Professor Yunes's research focuses sharply on the study of extreme gravitational phenomena that may reveal solutions to puzzles in fundamental physics, such as the late-time acceleration of the universe, the nature of dark matter, the baryogenesis problem, and the unification of quantum mechanics and general relativity. Departures from paradigms, or "anomalies" in the data, tell us that there is still much we do not know about the universe, and thus, much to learn. Hints toward an explanation for such anomalies may arise from extreme gravity observations, a regime where the gravitational force is simultaneously unfathomably large and violently changing, a regime that in fact we are only now beginning to probe with gravitational waves. The probing of this regime may provide important hints to the answer of common questions, such as, why is there more matter than antimatter in the universe? What is the true nature of dark matter? What is causing the universe to accelerate in its expansion at the measured rate? Understanding the physics and modeling the observables in this extreme gravity regime is Professor Yunes' primary focus. In this lecture, Prof. Yunes will discuss some of these questions and explain how scientists search for truth.

Professor Nico Yunes is a theoretical physicist who specializes in general relativity and gravitation. He has an international reputation for his work on tests of General Relativity with gravitational waves, universal relations in neutron stars, and black holes in theories beyond Einstein's. He is one of the creators of the parameterized post-Einsteinian framework to test Einstein's theory in a model-independent way with gravitational waves. Professor Yunes is also one of the discoverers of the I-Love-Q and the Binary Love universal relations of neutron stars, which are used by the LIGO scientific collaboration to infer the equation of state of matter at extreme densities, and he is the founding director of the Illinois Center for Advanced Studies of the Universe.

***2. THE FAIRNESS FOR ALL INITIATIVE – FINDING CIVILITY IN OUR DIFFERENCES**

Robin Fretwell Wilson, Professor of Law
and Director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

Location TBD

The Fairness for All Initiative is a nationwide group of legal scholars, advocates and legislators exploring whether mutual respect can alter the ferocity of the nation's political battles. "How do we get to a postmodern society in which we're not so fragmented, when we know our neighbors again, or we think of each other as neighbors, or we think of each other's humanity first?" asks Robin Fretwell Wilson, the director of the UI Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA), who helped organize the movement. In this program, you will learn more about this effort, and strategies we can all undertake to achieve civility, regardless of political and/or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

In addition to serving as the Director of IGPA, Robin Fretwell Wilson is the Mildred Van Voorhis Jones Chair in Law at the UI College of Law. Professor Wilson co-directs the College of Law's Epstein Health Law and Policy Program and co-directs and founded its Family Law and Policy Program. She specializes in family law and health law, and her research and teaching interests also include biomedical ethics, law and religion, children and violence, and law and science. Professor Wilson is the author of thirteen books, and she has ranked among the Top Ten Family Law Scholars in the United States for scholarly impact in each ranking done by the Leiter Report since 2010. Professor Wilson is the founder and directs the Fairness for All Initiative, which seeks to provide tangible support and advice to thought-leaders, stakeholders, policymakers, and state and local legislators who seek balanced approaches that respect both LGBT rights

and religious freedom, and she is the founder and director of the Tolerance Means Dialogues, a gift-supported effort to generate dialogue around deeply contested questions in civil society.

***3. “CREATING YOUR POWERFUL RESUME” WORKSHOP**

Emma Andruczyk
Senior Assistant Director, The Career Center

Thursday, September 30, 2021
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
Location TBD

Having a well thought-through and strategically laid out resume is key to landing an interview. Upon completion of this workshop, you will be able to draft an effective resume that describes your qualifications, skills, and experience.

***4. THE WORLD OF MANGA**

Lindsey Stirek
Assistant Director of Academic Programming, Japan House
and CHP alumna

Monday, October 4, 2021
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
Location TBD

Manga has become a global phenomenon and one of Japan’s most recognizable cultural exports. It has appeal across cultures and generations, and it is a medium of expression that often goes beyond entertainment, challenging the divisions between art, education, and amusement. This lecture introduces manga, its production, and its history to explore the evolution of manga and the ways it interacts with culture and society.

Lindsey Stirek works at Japan House as the Assistant Director of Academic Programming. She is a University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and CHP alumna and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Japanese Literature at The Ohio State University. She specializes in premodern Japanese literature and manga, and her current research focuses on manga iterations of the classical Japanese poetic collection Ogura Hyakunin Isshu. She has taught Japanese language and manga at Ohio State and University of Cincinnati, respectively, and is currently teaching courses on manga, anime, and Japanese tea ceremony at the Japan House at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

***5. THE 1619 PROJECT – CONTEXTUALIZING ITS PLACE IN CURRICULUM, AND U.S. HISTORY**

Christopher Span
Professor, Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership (EPOL)
Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor

Wednesday, October 6, 2021
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
Location TBD

Published in 2019 to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved Africans’ arrival on U.S. shores, “The 1619 Project” is being taught by many history professors. Professor Christopher Span believes the collection “should be added to every undergraduate course surveying American history,” and he has taught “The 1619 Project” in both his undergraduate and graduate courses. Learn more about the “1619 Project,” which details impact on everything from prison systems to land laws, as well as the origins of capitalism to the evolution of the American diet.

Christopher M. Span received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2001. He is the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in the College of Education and Professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership (EPOL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is an historian of education and specializes in the educational history of African Americans in the 19th century. He is the author of *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009), and has published numerous articles and book chapters on the educational history of African Americans. He was a co-editor for the *History of Education Quarterly*, is the immediate past Vice President of Division F (History of American Education) for the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and is the President of the History of Education Society (2020).

6. THE FOURTH STATE OF MATTER AND THE COOL THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH IT

David Ruzic, Abel Bliss Professor of
Nuclear Plasma and Radiological Engineering and
Director of the Center for Plasma Material Interactions
Daniel Andruczyk, Associate Research Professor, NPRE

Friday, October 8, 2021, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Nuclear Radiation Laboratory, 201 S. Goodwin Avenue
Urbana, Illinois

Professors Ruzic and Andruczyk will give you a guided tour of the plasma facilities in the Center for Plasma Material Interactions laboratories, and they will blow up a few things for you. They will tell you about and show you how plasmas are used to make everything from semiconductor chips to fusion energy. In addition, they will tell you about a GIANT FUSION DEVICE operating at Illinois. HIDRA (Hybrid Illinois Device for Research and Applications) weighs 70 tons and will use 2,000,000 Watts of electricity. Hail HIDRA!

****NOTE: For logistical reasons, this SAS will be limited to the first 15 confirmed registrants.****

***7. THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

Rob Chappell Assistant to the Honors Dean, ACES Academic Programs	Tuesday, October 12, 2021 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. Location TBD
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Alexander the Great is a larger-than-life historical figure, and he was truly a legend in his own time. This presentation will introduce some of the most famous tales of Alexander’s adventures in Asia and how these legends made their way from ancient Greece into medieval Europe, the Middle East, and beyond – down to the present day.

Rob Chappell enrolled at the University of Illinois as a freshman in the fall of 1986. He majored in Latin and obtained his B.A. degree in Classical Philology in May 1991 with Bronze Tablet Honors. He also completed an M.A. degree in Germanic Languages and Literatures at the U of I in May 1996. Rob began his administrative professional career in May 1997 at the UI Graduate College, where he ran its Information Office for three years. He has served as the Assistant to the Honors Dean in ACES Academic Programs since April 2000. His master’s thesis (on vampirology in a 19th-century Swiss-German novella) was published as a book in 2012, and he continues to lecture and write in his spare time.

***8. FILM SHOWING AND DISCUSSION OF “778 Bullets”**

Angela Aguayo Associate Professor, Media and Cinema Studies and Institute of Communications Research	Friday, October 22, 2021 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. (including movie snacks) 212 Honors House (unless otherwise notified)
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In November 1970, university, state and local police shot 778 Bullets into an off-campus rental house in Carbondale, IL. The residence was rented to a handful of university students, some were assumed to be associated with the local Black Panther Party. Unlike other police raids of known Black Panther residences across the country, the Carbondale Panthers shot back. Using archive material, newspaper accounts, witness testimony and experts in the field, 778 Bullets recovers a little-known history of resistance and resilience of the human struggle for self-determination. (*Description excerpted from imdb.com*) The film’s running time is 20 minutes, and we will discuss the film after the viewing, as well as the process Professor Aguayo undertook to create the documentary.

Angela Aguayo is the award-winning director and producer of this film, and her second book, *Documentary Resistance: Social Change and Participatory Media* (2019), was published by Oxford University Press. She combines a scholarly interest in social change documentary with critical production practice, and she has built an interdisciplinary, community engagement research agenda exemplified by the creation of programs like Girls Make Movies, the Rural Civil Rights Project and the Illinois Community Media Project.

****Note: this SAS will be limited to the first 20 confirmed registrants.****

***9. WHY DON’T LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES SEE “EYE-TO-EYE”? AN EXAMINATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Chadly Stern Assistant Professor, Psychology	Monday, October 25, 2021 5:15 – 6:30 p.m. Location TBD
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People often develop disparate perceptions of the social world, which can lead to hostility and conflict. In this presentation, Professor Stern will discuss some of the ways people across the political spectrum do (and do not) psychologically differ in how they process information. He will also examine how these psychological factors can lead liberals (those on the "left") and conservatives (those on the "right") to form different impressions of their environments, including the degree to which they believe that their views are accurate, how positively they feel about people who belong to various groups, and the attitudes they hold toward social policies.

Chadly Stern is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology. He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at New York University before moving to the University of Illinois. His research addresses questions related to political psychology, social cognition, and intergroup relations, with a primary focus on how political beliefs correspond to social perception and behavior. In recognition of his work, he has been named a Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science, received the 2019 Early Career Award from the International Social Cognition Network, and was recently elected as a Fellow of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology.

10. GENDER PRONOUNS – EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Dennis Baron
Professor Emeritus, English

Tuesday, November 2, 2021
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

Zoom info will be sent to registrants prior to the program
(students must submit a paragraph response to a prompt
after the program to receive credit for virtual program)

Everybody's announcing their pronouns—in their email, on their Twitters and Instas, in class, even on Zoom. "I'm she/her," they say. "I'm he/him." "My pronoun is they." "I'm zie/hir." Or "em" or "xe" or even, "I don't use pronouns." People call them gender pronouns, or nonbinary pronouns, or gender-neutral pronouns, or even neopronouns, though they're anything but new. Singular 'they' goes back to the 14th century. A Yale doctor coined *e, es, em* in 1841. *Thon* was coined in 1858 by a well-known American hymn writer. *Se, heesh, le, um*, and a few hundred more pop up from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th. *Heer, hiser, and himer* were promoted by Ella Young, Chicago's first woman Superintendent of Schools, in 1912. The editor of the *Sacramento Bee* coined *hir* in 1920 and its reporters used that pronoun sporadically through the 1940s. A. A. Milne, who created Winnie the Pooh, made the case for *heesh* in 1931. Those early pronouns sought gender equality for women. Today the gender pronouns address the need for words to refer to people who are nonbinary, trans, and gender-nonconforming, as well. Other languages are exploring ways to broaden their representation of gender too, notably Swedish, French, Spanish, and German.

What's behind these pronouns is a sense that, so far as third person singular personal pronouns are concerned, the English pronoun system is just not inclusive enough. Gender pronouns seek to remedy that, offering a way to recognize someone's humanity, to acknowledge people's right to choose how they should be addressed. Sometimes pronouns politicize gender to emphasize social inequity. Sometimes they hide gender when it's irrelevant. Or they protect a person's identity, the right to remain anonymous in a hostile online world.

Grammar may not be physics, but for every pronoun there seems to be an equal and opposite "antipronoun." A tweet complains, "If you use pronouns, I can't be your friend." A professor in Ohio is suing his university for making him say a trans student's pronoun. Even the Supreme Court gets in on the act. In a 2021 case about Facebook that has nothing to do with pronouns, Justice Alito went out of his way to argue that pronoun laws and regulations violate constitutional speech protections, setting up a conflict between antidiscrimination laws, authorized by the Fourteenth Amendment, and First Amendment guarantees of free speech.

Professor Dennis Baron writes about the English language and its history, emphasizing communication technologies, minority language and dialect rights, gender issues, and the intersection of language and the law. In addition to scholarly publications, he frequently comments on language, law, and technology issues in the news, and his essays have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and many other papers; he is regularly consulted by journalists and has appeared on CNN, NPR, the BBC, the Voice of America, and the CBC – he's discussed the changing English language with radio hosts ranging from Stephen Fry to Joan Rivers. He's consulted in a number of legal cases, and served as lead author of "the Linguists' Brief," a linguistic analysis of the Second Amendment in the Supreme Court case *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), the one about the right to bear arms. His latest book is *What's Your Pronoun? Beyond He and She* (Liveright 2020), a social, political, and legal history of English gender pronouns from the 18th century to the present. And his next book is provisionally titled, *Unprotected Speech: You can't always say what you want*.

***11. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE SCIENCES**

Esther Ngumbi
Assistant Professor, Integrative Biology
And African American Studies

later semester date to be determined, 2021
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
Location TBD

Professor Ngumbi performs cutting edge research on pest- and drought-resistant crops, with her work driven by her concerns for vulnerable farmers who live in countries lacking social safety nets, where one season of crop devastation due to insects can mean going hungry and being unable to pay for their children's education. She has strongly focused on communicating the science in her work to widespread audiences in order to effect real international impact, having penned bylines in *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *Time* magazine and *NPR*, with the goal of making her science as publicly available as possible.

Additionally, Professor Ngumbi is engaged in the global community through a variety of initiatives. In 2012 she founded Spring Break Kenya, an organization that mobilizes young university students into public service, and she and her parents co-founded The Dr. Ndumi Faulu Academy in early 2012 to ensure that all children in Kenya can have a quality education. In 2014, she founded Oyeska Greens, an agriculture-focused start-up that empowers farmers at the Kenyan Coast.

Professor Ngumbi is an author, researcher, educator, mentor, speaker and a champion for change around the issues of hunger, gender, education, youth activism, agriculture, sustainability, and public service. As the founder of organizations that empower farmers and youth in Kenya, she's served as a mentor for entities like the Clinton Global University Initiative and President Obama's Young Leadership Program. Her research is concerned with understanding the multifaceted uses of chemical signals (both volatile and non-volatile) by herbivores, natural enemies, plants and their associated microorganisms and insects; she has received three U.S. patents for her research directed at basic and applied aspects of using microbial inoculants to promote growth and enhance tolerance to drought stress in multiple crops.