

Greenfield Community College
Senior Symposia
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Greenfield Community College

Senior Symposia

Fall 2019



Online registration and payment available at:
www.gcc.mass.edu/senior-learning

About Senior Symposia

The Senior Symposia program at Greenfield Community College is a collaborative effort between Greenfield Community College's Office of Workforce Development & Community Education and area senior citizens. The program is a way for area seniors to continue their education in a format that best suits their needs, interests, and resources. Persons of all ages are welcome to attend these events.

Program Planning

Senior Symposia is planned by a volunteer committee drawn from the community. The committee welcomes suggestions for topics and speakers. If you are interested in serving, please email non-credit@gcc.mass.edu.

Registration Policies

While walk-ins are normally welcome, participants are strongly urged to pre-register at www.gcc.mass.edu/senior-learning or on the enclosed form. Online payment is secure, convenient, and fast. Pre-registration assures your seat and helps us plan for the event. A full refund will be made if a symposium is cancelled.

GCC is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. For disability accommodation, please contact the Workforce Development & Community Education Operations Supervisor at (413) 775-1677.

Fall 2019 Calendar

Week of	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9/9			9/12 <i>Ultimate Frisbee</i>
9/30	10/1 <i>Action in Climate Change</i>		
10/14		10/16 <i>Berkshires Rust Belt</i>	
10/21	10/22 <i>Post Soviet World</i>		
10/28	10/29 <i>Double Edge Theater</i>		
11/4	11/5 <i>Wildlife Habitat</i>		
11/11			11/14 <i>The Talking Dead</i>
11/20		11/20 <i>Singin' in the Rain *</i>	

* 11/20/2019 "Singin' in the Rain" is at the Downtown Center; All other symposia are in Stinchfield Hall at the Main Campus

Singin' in the Rain: A Classic Movie and a Conversation

Moderator: Carolyn Anderson

Wednesday, November 20, 2-4:30 p.m.

[This symposium will be held at the GCC

Downtown Campus] [Note extended time]

Many film historians consider this exuberant MGM satire the best musical ever made. Co-directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, *Singin' in the Rain* cheerfully splashed on screens in luscious color in 1952, a time of uncertainty in the movie industry. The musical comedy's setting recalls another time of considerable industry upheaval: the late 1920s, when a panic-ridden Hollywood had to confront the difficult transition from silent movies to talkies. The engaging trio of Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor and Debbie Reynolds manage this transition with a palpable joyfulness. Kelly's rain-soaked rendition of the title song would become emblematic of the delight musicals can deliver to audiences.

Carolyn Anderson, Professor Emerita at UMass Amherst, was a founding member of the University's Interdepartmental Program in Film Studies and represented UMass on the Five College Film Council. She has published widely on film topics, lectured in a range of venues internationally, and routinely serves as a judge for film festivals.

Registration for this symposium is limited to 65

Registration Fees

A fee of \$10 is charged for each symposium.

Locations

The first seven Senior Symposia for Fall 2019 will be held in Stinchfield Lecture Hall on the Main Campus at Greenfield Community College, located at I College Drive in Greenfield.

Stinchfield Lecture Hall is located on the Third Floor of the Main Building in the Core on the North Side. Follow the signs to Stinchfield and N335. There is an elevator in the Main Entrance of the building that will take you to the third floor. You will get off the elevator in the Library, and walk straight down the hall until you reach Stinchfield Lecture Hall. Please park in lots A-E.

*** The final symposium for the fall, a screening of and conversation about *Singin' in the Rain*, will be held at the GCC Downton Center, located at 270 Main Street in Greenfield. ***

**In case of inclement weather call (413) 775-1010.
If GCC is closed, the symposium will be cancelled.**

Senior Symposia Capital Fund Drive

Dear Senior Symposia Supporter,

Over the past 16 years, Senior Symposia - a collaboration between Greenfield Community College and area seniors - has introduced thousands of local seniors to new ideas, information and education. The program's renowned two-hour lectures have provided exposure to topics from Opera to Fake News.

Since its beginning, the College's Office of Community Education has carried all administrative costs of the programs, while the minimal (\$10/session) fees have paid for direct program costs.

Unfortunately, declining state revenues and increasing costs have brought pressure on the College's ability to provide this wonderful resource for senior residents of Franklin and Hampshire Counties. Moving forward, the need to balance the annual Senior Symposia budget suggests the distasteful prospect of increasing program fees to cover expenses. In response, another option has been chosen - to create an endowment that will allow our programs to continue.

We are excited to announce the launch of a Capital Fund Drive with an ambitious goal of \$100,000 that will allow for the creation of the endowed fund to generate a future stream of needed annual program income. Nearly 20% of the goal has been secured through lead gifts and we now ask you to help.

The Talking Dead: Sleepwalking and Spiritualism in the 19th Century Pioneer Valley

Presenter: Robert Cox

Thursday, November 14, 2:00-4:00

During the mid-19th century a new set of ideas and practices came together to create "Modern Spiritualism," a movement rooted in the belief that communication with departed friends and family had become possible. Phenomena such as spontaneous somnambulism and sympathetic communication with the dead—through séance and "spirit photography"—were ways of transcending the ultimate barrier of death. Spiritualism became America's fastest growing religion in the 1850s. Robert Cox will explore the origins and meaning of Modern Spiritualism, using examples from western Massachusetts, a 19th century hotbed of the talking dead.

Robert Cox is the author of *Body and Soul: A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism* (2003; 2017). A self-described "recovering paleontologist and molecular biologist," he received a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan and has published articles and books on topics ranging from Lewis and Clark to New England cuisine. Cox is head of Special Collections and University Archives at UMass Amherst in 2004.

A Stitch in Time: Repairing the Wildlife Habitat

Presenter: Cynthia Boettner

Tuesday, November 5, 2-4 p.m.

Our local birds, mammals, and other wildlife depend on the native plant communities for necessary food and shelter. Invasive plants can disrupt those interrelationships and degrade or even replace important habitats. Cynthia Boettner will describe the challenges land managers face and the ways they prioritize invasive species or habitat areas for attention. She will focus on three of the many species undergoing management in the Connecticut River watershed. Oriental bittersweet is changing the structure of important forestland. Mile-a-minute vine is newer to the area and its spread may be possible to curtail. Water chestnut can be prevented from overtaking ponds, coves, and lakes. The help of concerned citizens and landowners has been instrumental in this work.

Cynthia Boettner worked with the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge as the Coordinator for the Invasive Plant Control Initiative for two decades. Though retired, Boettner remains involved in conservation projects. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of Michigan and an M.A. from the Conway School of Landscape Design.

We hope you can support this valuable and engaging community resource to continue long into the future by sending your gift of \$1,000, \$500 or any amount meaningful to you in the enclosed envelope or visit www.gcc.mass.edu/give for an online donation.

Thank you for considering supporting our beloved Senior Symposia. We will keep you up to date on the progress of this effort.

Campaign Co-Chairs:



Margo Culley
Professor of English Emerita
University of Massachusetts



Tim Blagg
Editor (retired)
The Recorder

Things we heard last spring from our attendees...

The Story of the Buffalo Soldiers presented by Alyssa Arnell

“Really thought provoking...touching not just on Buffalo Soldiers but also the origins of race relations in America.”

Architecture and Place: Details of 18th-Century Connecticut River Valley Dwellings presented by Eric Gradoia

“Great photos really illustrated unique elements and common forms.”

New England Takes Flight presented by Amanda Goodheart Parks

“Just about the right organization of stories, facts, analysis of past and how it influenced the next generation of aviation.”

The Common Pot: Native Writing presented by Lisa Brooks

“A valuable corrective to the history passed down for generations...told with deep understanding, impeccable authority and passionate conviction.”

King Philip and the Renegade Skaters of Warren Falls presented by Wesley Blixt

“He’s sharing an important bit of history of his reportage as a journalist...The content was really valuable.”

Double Edge Theatre: The Renowned Theatre and the Cultivation of Living Culture

Presenter: Hannah Jarrell

Tuesday, October 29, 2-4 p.m.

Double Edge Theatre is a 37-year-old theatre ensemble now at home in Ashfield on the former Fitzgerald farm and the recipient of a 2019 NEPR Arts & Humanities Award. Over decades Double Edge has worked to connect with communities on both local and global scales. Hannah Jarrell will share a close look at the company’s history, its methods of training and performance in devising original theatrical productions, and its mission of Living Culture and Art Justice. She will screen a performance video and discuss the ensemble’s vision for the future at home and around the world.

Hannah Jarrell is ensemble member and Associate Director at Double Edge Theatre. She has created and performed numerous roles for the Theatre’s Summer Spectacle performances and delights in incorporating stilts and flying in her work. Born and raised in Texas, Jarrell holds a B.A. in Theatre, German, and Spanish from Southwestern University in Texas and a M.F.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College.

Paradise and Paradox in the Post-Soviet World

Presenters: Vivian Leskes and Frank Ward

Tuesday, October 22, 2-4 p.m.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union made fifteen newly independent states accessible to the world, while leaving them in political, economic, and cultural upheaval. Vivian Leskes and Frank Ward will share their experiences of working and traveling throughout the Silk Road countries of post-Soviet Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and the European post-Soviet republics (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia). Through storytelling and prize-winning photographs, this symposium will explore the nations that emerged from the ashes of the USSR.

Vivian Leskes, retired professor of ESL at Holyoke Community College, first encountered the post-Soviet world while working in Ukraine. She received a 2008 Fulbright grant to Irkutsk, Siberia. Leskes often works for the U. S. Department of State as an English Language Specialist, frequently training teachers in Central Asia.

Frank Ward, photography professor at HCC, has made 10 trips to post-Soviet countries, including touring Central Asia as a Cultural Envoy in Photography for the State Department. His post-Soviet pictures earned him a Mass Cultural Council Fellowship in 2011.

Ultimate Frisbee/Ultimate Peace

Presenters: Linda and Robert Sidorsky

Thursday, September 12, 2-4 p.m.

Ultimate Frisbee has been described as a combination of football, basketball, and soccer, with a twist: no referee. The game is self-regulated by the players, who settle disputes by agreement. The Ultimate Peace Program in the Middle East brings Muslim, Jewish, and Christian youth together to play on the field as well as off. Strangers become friends, as contact in a culture of trust and empathy changes mindsets. This presentation will explore how the year-round program works, with the aim of spreading its values throughout the Middle East through its players.

Linda Sidorsky, one of the co-founders of Ultimate Peace, is COO and Director of Operation, overseeing programming, evaluation, and learning with Ultimate Peace.

Robert Sidorsky, DVM, coached Ultimate Frisbee at Northfield Mount Hermon for several years, co-founded the New England Private School Ultimate League in 2001, and is currently helping Linda here and in the Middle East.

Action in a Time of Climate Change

Presenter: Brian Adams

Tuesday, October 1, 2-4 p.m.

Climate change: it's happening now; we are the cause of it; and the consequences are potentially catastrophic. Here in New England we're witnessing increasingly bizarre weather patterns, warmer rivers and ocean water temperatures, changes in flora and fauna, a rise in invasive species, and agricultural instability. We can continue with business as usual as this dystopian nightmare descends upon us, or we can get to work helping to solve this climate crisis. We will talk about why climate change is such a threat and discuss what we can do to bring about a fundamental change and move toward a more sustainable future.

Brian Adams is Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science at GCC. Along with his wife, he is actively engaged in a project helping to install photovoltaics on non-profits in the Pioneer Valley. Adams is the author of *Love in the Time of Climate Change*, a romantic comedy about climate change, as well as two other Young Adult rom-coms: *KABOOM!* and *Offline*.

Rust Belt in the Berkshires: What We Can Learn from a People's History

Presenter: Maynard Seider

Wednesday, October 16, 2-4 p.m.

Fueled by the labor of immigrants and the power of the Hoosic River, North Berkshire County was a growing industrial region in the 19th century. Besides cotton mills and shoe factories, the construction of the Hoosac Tunnel gave the area a frontier feel, but also led to the death of nearly 200 miners. Traditional histories tell us little of the workers who spun the cotton, cut the leather, and dug a path through a mountain range. Rather, we learn about captains of industry, presidents of banks, and political elites. An alternative history considers the laborers themselves, often women, recent immigrants, and people of color. Maynard Seider will focus on North Berkshire as it industrializes, deindustrializes, and faces an uncertain future.

Maynard Seider is Emeritus Professor of Sociology from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams. He wrote and directed the documentary *Farewell to Factory Towns?* (2012) and is the author of *The Gritty Berkshires: A People's History from the Hoosac Tunnel to MASS MoCA* (2019).
